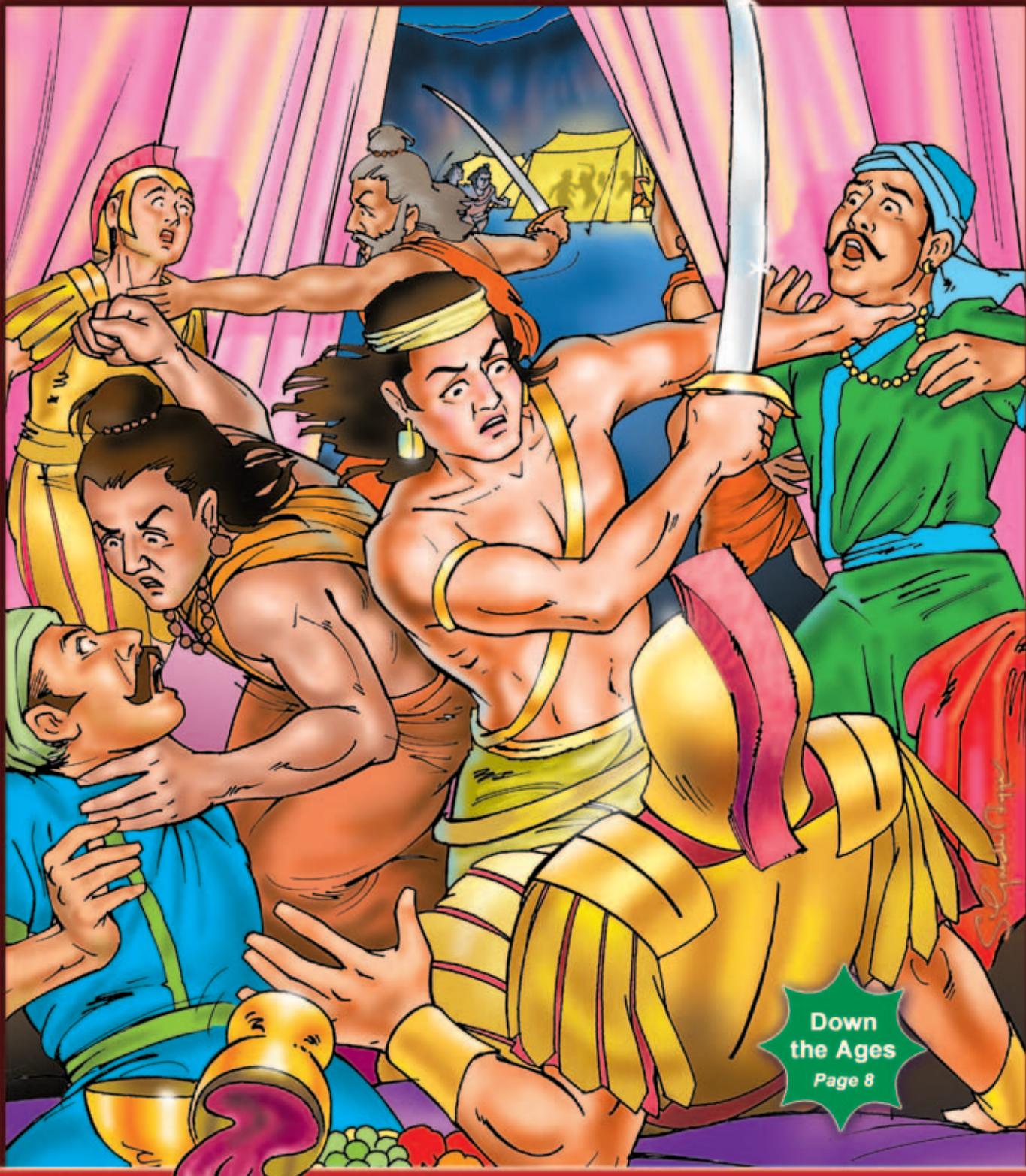


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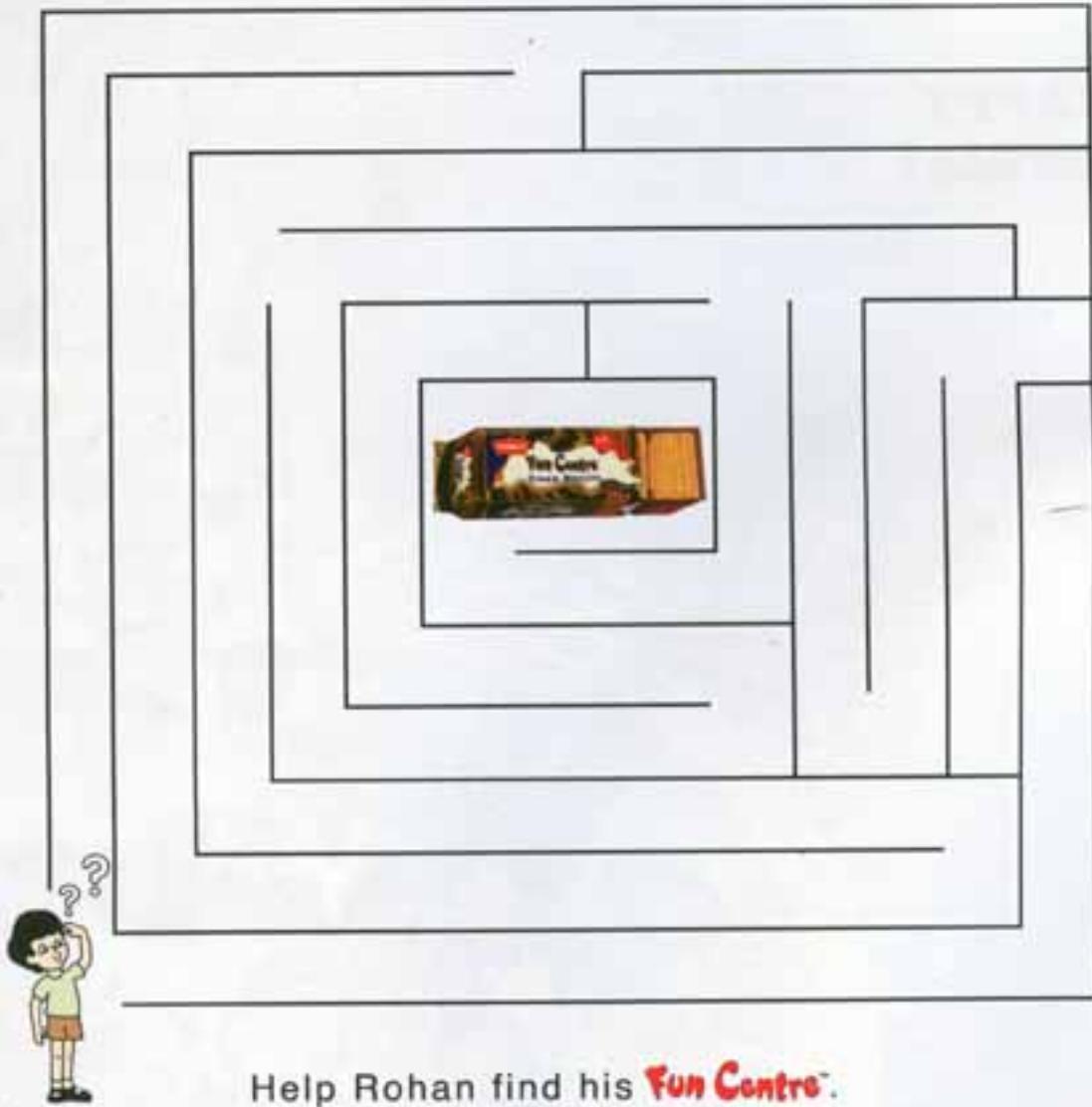


# CHANDAMAMA



In this  
issue

**KALEIDOSCOPE** WRITINGS OF CHILDREN UNDER 14 YEARS OF AGE



DRM / 2008

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ACTIVE



YANKEE



ROBO



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## From clean thoughts to clean surroundings

**R**ecently, different parts of the world were affected by an epidemic, causing the death of several persons. It took some time for the virus to be isolated. Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra had a mysterious fever taking the toll of the lives of many children. Doctors and hospitals continue their fight to save many others afflicted by the same disease.

It is generally claimed that a majority of diseases are air-borne or water-borne or caused by contaminated food. This is where cleanliness plays a significant role. If only individuals maintain cleanliness in their homes and surroundings, and in the neighbourhood, most diseases can be prevented.

On one occasion Gandhiji lamented: "Members of a family will keep their house clean, but they will not be interested in the neighbour's." Keeping one's environment clean and green cannot be a difficult task.

Mosquitos breed in stagnated water. One variety breeds in flowing water, too. Pollution of flowing water, in rivers and canals, is invariably man-made. It is, therefore, the people's responsibility to ensure that such water bodies are not sullied. This responsibility is greater with the educated people.

Mahatma Gandhi said : "Our cleanliness must be both internal and external. Truthfulness is the essence of purity; it is another name for cleanliness."

If we nourish clean thoughts, then we would wish for cleanliness externally, too. Isn't it true that cleanliness is next to godliness?

### Words of Wisdom

### Promise Yourself

- To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind;
- To talk health, happiness, and prosperity to every person you meet;
- To make all your friends feel that there is something in them;
- To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true;
- To think only the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best;
- To live in the faith that the whole world is on your side so long as you are true to the best that is in you.

*C.D. Larson*

Enter the Heroes of India Quiz and win fabulous prizes

# Heroes of India - 24

**1** I lay down on a breach to stop water from destroying my guru Sage Dhounya's field. Later I became a great sage myself. Who am I?

**2** I was born with eight crooked bends in my body. I saved my father, Sage Kohoda, by defeating Sage Vandi in a debate. Do you know me?

**3** I am the middle son of Sage Richika. Viswamitra is my uncle. I was saved from being sacrificed because of my devotion. What is my name?

**4** I was the best disciple of Sage Veda. I retrieved the golden earrings from the underworld for my guru patni. Do you know my name?

**5** I am the son of the guru of the Pandavas and Kauravas. I am an expert in archery and am also immortal. Name me.

Here are some of the young heroes in our mythology. Do you know them?

Three all correct entries will receive bicycles as prizes.\*



Fill in the blanks next to each question legibly. Which of these five is your favourite hero and why? Write 10 words on **My favourite young hero in mythology is .....**

Name of participant:.....

..... Age:..... Class:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please tear off this page and mail it to:

**Heroes of India Quiz-24**

CHANDAMAMA INDIA LIMITED

No.82, Defence Officers' Colony

Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097.

On/before **October 5, 2003.**

#### Instructions

1. The contest is open to children in the age group 8-14 years.
2. \*Three winners will be selected for this contest from entries in all the language editions. **Winners will receive bicycles of appropriate size.** If there are more than one all correct entries, winners will be selected on the basis of the best description of **My favourite hero.**
3. The judges' decision will be final.
4. No correspondence will be entertained in this regard.
5. The winners will be intimated by post.

Prizes brought to you by





## Village takes to vegetarianism

More and more people have, of late, been veering towards vegetarianism. A village in Orissa is unique in that none of the fifty odd families cooks meat or fish dishes. They eat only vegetarian food. Bentasalia, 50 km from Dhenkanal, in eastern Orissa, may look like any other village in the State, but it is different. The people are Vaishnavites and followers of Saint Achyutananda. They have been following Vaishnavite rituals for ages. So much so, they lead a peaceful life, they live for a longer number of years, and have not suffered from national calamities or epidemics.

Men and animals thus have a peaceful co-existence in Bentasalia.



## Mural in bas-relief

The 1,200 ft long wall of Sri Sankara University of Kaladi, near Trichur in Kerala, is adorned with a painting done in bas-relief. The 5 ft high mural depicts a guru imparting knowledge to his sishya in true upanishadic way, taking him along all four yugas -

Satya, Treta, Dwapara, and Kali yuga — in a continuous

sequence. There are picturisations of the *Ramayana*,

*Mahabharata*, *Shakuntalam*, *Meghasandesam*,

*Raghuvamsam*, Bharata's 108 karanas used in

Bharata Natyam, and the life of Adi Sankara,

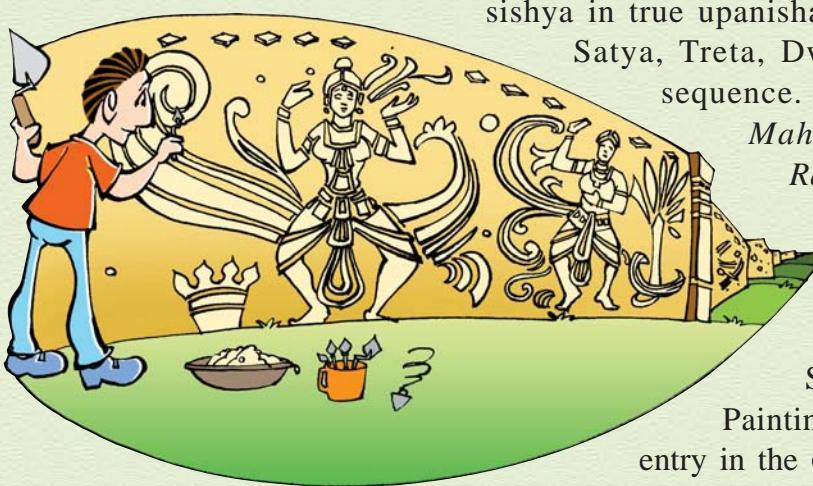
to mention only a few. The work was

completed in 1998 after a three year toil. It

was almost a single-handed effort by K.K.

Suresh, head of the Department of Mural

Painting in the University. The work has gained an entry in the *Guinness Book of World Records*.





**B**indusara, who had succeeded his father Chandragupta, the founder of the Mauryan dynasty, was wondering who among his sons would be fit enough to be declared the Crown Prince. When news reached him about the rebellion in Taxila, he thought it would give him an opportunity to find out which son was more capable.

The rebellion, he was told, had the support of the Greeks left by Alexander who, after capturing some of the Indian territories from the Nanda kings, had handed them to his followers to rule.

One legend says, on the death of Alexander in 323 BC, there was a struggle for power in these satrapies where the people wanted the Greeks to leave. Chandragupta had taken advantage of the unrest by attacking some of

these territories and annexing them to his own empire. Taxila was one such territory where a rebellion was brewing. The rebel group had the support of the Greeks who aimed at establishing their supremacy once again. The administrative head of Taxila rushed to the Mauryan capital, Pataliputra, and appealed to Bindusara to quell the revolt.

Bindusara sent for his eldest son and gave him orders to march to Taxila. Prince Susima was given a huge army and he was confident of victory, so that his claim to succeed the ageing ruler would go undisputed. However, the prince, who had been given to a life of pleasure, could not rise to the occasion and after a week's fierce battle, he had to retreat with a much depleted army.

Prince Susima found himself speechless when he was ushered into the presence of Bindusara, who rebuked him for his incapability to capture the rebels. The king now sent for Prince Ashoka. It was common knowledge that the step-brothers had been nursing a rivalry for the position of Crown Prince.

Ashoka took orders from his father and immediately started for Taxila accompanied by a handful of men. On reaching their destination, Ashoka asked his men to disguise themselves as wayfarers, commoners, and hermits. They spent a few days trying to find who the leader of the rebels was. He was advised to present their demands to the king's representative. It was decided that a meeting would take place at the rebel camp at midnight to avoid the gaze of the rival group.

At the stroke of midnight, Ashoka and his men in disguise entered the tent where the leader of the rebels and his Greek cohorts were waiting. They were taken by surprise. Ashoka and his men, who had by now shed their disguise, overpowered them after a brief fight. The rebels were captured, while the Greeks were taken to the frontiers and set free.

It was a triumphant Prince Ashoka who returned to Pataliputra amidst great rejoicing. Soon afterwards he was declared the Crown Prince.

NEW TALES OF  
KING VIKRAM  
AND  
THE VETALA

# THREE CHARACTERS

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Eerie laughter of ghosts rose above the moaning of jackals. Flashes of lightning revealed fearful faces.

But King Vikram did not swerve. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. With the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, he began crossing the desolate cremation ground.

“O King, it seems that you are firm about the decision you’ve taken. But it is better for you to know that there are people who often change their mind and actions. I wonder if we can call them foolish. Let me cite an instance. Pay your attention to my narration. That might bring you some relief as you trudge along,” said the vampire.

The vampire went on: Vikrampuri and Anandpuri were neighbouring kingdoms. But their rulers had been inimical to each other for three generations. Their enmity resulted in frequent clashes. The common people were the worst sufferers. Because both the kingdoms were equally strong; neither could win a decisive victory over the other.

Two young princes ascended the thrones of the two kingdoms. The young king of Vikrampuri was Vikramverma and that of Anandpuri was Anandsen.

Vikramverma devoted himself to the welfare of his subjects. But Anandsen, as soon as he became king, decided to lead an army expedition against Vikrampuri. His minister, Bhadrapal, supported him.

But not his General Ranavir “My lord, what is new in a war against Vikrampuri? Should you not rather pay attention to the problems of your people who are poor?”

The question made the king uneasy and he was





annoyed. "Well, my general, once Vikrampuri is annexed, I'll have no headache. After that I'll devote all my energy to secure prosperity for my people," he replied.

"My lord, Vikrampuri might not be stronger than us, but it is not weaker. Even if we defeat it, to annex it is not going to be easy. The people of Vikrampuri will continue to revolt and harass us. We then will have to apply force to suppress them. This process will go on," said General Ranavir as humbly as he could.

But the king was in no mood to listen to his sane counsel. He asked him curtly to prepare for the expedition.

King Vikramverma had his trusted spies planted in Anandpuri. He got the intelligence about Anandpuri's war preparations. He was sad, but he decided to make an offensive move. That would catch the war-mongers napping, he thought. He mustered whatever strength he could within twenty-four hours and suddenly advanced upon Anandpuri.

Neither the people nor the army of Anandpuri was prepared for this situation. They got panicky. King Anandsen, of course, immediately got ready to offer resistance, but there was chaos throughout his capital.

Within an hour of his going out to fight he was killed.

General Ranavir commanded his soldiers to beat a retreat into the fort. He closed the gates of the fort and continued to defend it courageously.

Minister Bhadrapal met him and said, "You did not want war. I am of the same opinion now. Why prolong the battle unnecessarily now that the king is dead? Let's surrender to the enemy."

"That cannot be!" said the General in a stern voice. He continued defending the fort successfully and the army of Vikrampuri made vain attempts to break into it.

But one night, the enemy entered the fort through a secret passage. Nobody except King Vikramverma knew that it was Minister Bhadrapal who had opened the passage for him.

General Ranavir was captured.

"General! You shall be executed. However, if you publicly accept me as your king, you will be spared," said King Vikramverma.

"You may execute me," said Ranavir.

"Do you have any last wish?" asked the king.

"My appeal to you is, be kind towards the people. The subjects of both the kingdoms have suffered much on account of the continuous conflict between the two dynasties. Find joy in serving the people, not in reducing them to misery," said Ranavir.

The king nodded. He did not execute the General. Both Ranavir and Bhadrapal were allowed to live as ordinary citizens.

King Anandsen had died without leaving an heir. His kinsmen were well provided for under King Vikramverma's arrangements. King Vikramverma ruled both the kingdoms ensuring equality and justice. The noblemen of Anandsen's court were not humiliated in any way. Peace prevailed in the region. Prosperity came to the people.

Bhadrapal, the ex-minister, who looked forward to getting a high position, was disappointed. The king took no interest in him.

Three years passed. One day Ranavir met the king and said: "Can I be of any service to my people?"

King Vikramverma sprang up to embrace him. "From this very moment I appoint you my Chief Adviser. Besides,

## Amazing Facts



Butterflies taste with their feet.

A hippo can open its mouth wide enough to fit a 4 ft tall child inside!



as my Viceroy, you are to govern Anandpuri", he said.

Bhadrapal was surprised when he heard the news. He met the king the next day and said, "My lord, you may be pleased to utilise my services!"

"Don't you have any landed property?" asked King Vikramverma.

"I have enough, my lord," replied the ex-minister.

"Why then are you anxious to do some other work? Raise good crops and live happily as a free citizen!" advised the king.

Bhadrapal's face fell. He went away disappointed.

The vampire, after a brief pause, asked King Vikram in a challenging tone: "O King, can you remove my doubts about the three characters? General Ranavir was not in favour of a war. Why then did he not surrender immediately after his king's death? Minister Bhadrapal was in favour of war. Why then did he advise the General to surrender? Why did the king not reward Bhadrapal who opened the secret passage for him? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum though you may know the answers, your head would roll off your shoulders!"

Forthwith King Vikram replied: "Ranavir was against war because he had the interests of the kingdom in his

heart. But he was right in continuing to fight after the king's death. Had he surrendered immediately, he would have been obliged to accept humiliating terms from the enemy. Had Bhadrapal not betrayed, Ranavir would have drawn many concessions from Vikramverma.

"Minister Bhadrapal was selfish. He supported the war efforts only to please the king. After the king's death he was afraid that Ranavir might occupy the throne if the enemy had retreated without capturing the fort. King Vikramverma knew that Bhadrapal was treacherous. Why should he reward the fellow?

"The king realised that for Ranavir the only concern was the kingdom's welfare. That is the question the general raised even when threatened with death. When Ranavir realised that the new king was a really good and peace-loving man who did not discriminate against the people of Anandpuri, he decided to cooperate with him. Men like Ranavir do not like to waste their time and energy. They want to do something good and useful. King Vikramverma appreciated his mind."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.





**Send your questions to :**

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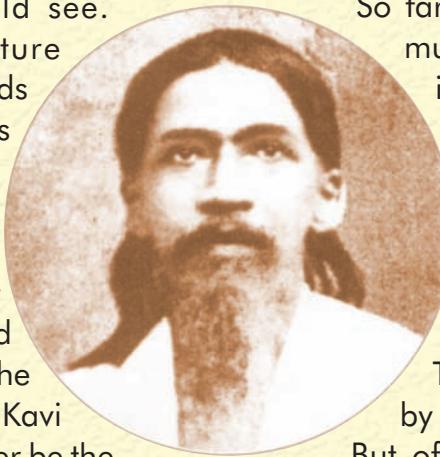
**or e-mail to**

**askaway@chandamama.org.**

**Q** Is there any difference between a **seer** and a **saint**?

- **Jyotiranjan Biswal, Durgapur.**

**A** In ancient India, a **seer** referred to an illumined person who could see. Needless to say any creature having eyes, animals and birds included, can see. That does not make it a seer. One who can see the truth - what people with ordinary sight cannot see - was a seer. **Kavi** also meant a seer. Only a **Kavi** could present his vision of truth for the benefit of others. By and by, **Kavi** came to mean a poet, whatever be the theme, substance and quality of his poetry or verse. In our time, the one who qualifies for the status in both its original sense is Sri Aurobindo, the seer of human destiny, the Mahayogi and the great poet.



In course of time, the word **seer** came to mean one who is a spiritually enlightened person - a **Yogi**, a sage, an **Acharya**, a preceptor. But it will be good to use the term with some caution.

So far as the term **saint** is concerned, much depends on what you mean by it. **Saint** is basically a Christian concept. It refers to one who is so holy and virtuous that after death he or she is destined to be in heaven. At the moment, sainthood is about to be bestowed on the late Mother Teresa. The ritual will be performed by the Pope.

But often the term **saint** is used as a synonym for the Indian word **Santh** - which means a holy man. It is also loosely used to mean a sage. So, you can see that much depends on the context in which such words are used and with how much understanding they are used.



Camels have three eyelids to protect themselves from blowing sand!

## Amazing Facts

The placement of a donkey's eyes on its head enables it to see all four feet at all times!



# The Flute Player

**K**amla's grandmother lived on the outskirts of a city, and just across the road from the house, there were fields and villages stretching away for hundreds of miles. But Kamla had never been across the main road which separated the busy city from the flat green plains that stretched endlessly towards the horizon.

Kamla was used to city life. In England, it was London and Manchester. In India, it was Delhi and Jaipur. Rainy Manchester was, of course, different in many ways from sun-drenched Jaipur, and Indian cities had stronger smells and more vibrant colours than their English counterparts. Nevertheless, they had much in common: busy people always on the move, money constantly changing hands, buses to catch, schools to attend, parties to go to, TV to watch. Kamla had seen very little of the English countryside, even less of India outside the cities.

Down the main road passed big yellow buses, cars, tongas, motor-cycles, bullock-carts. This steady flow of traffic somehow, seemed, to form a barrier between the city, on one side of the trunk road, and the distant, sleepy villages on the other. It seemed to cut India into half—the India she knew, and the India she had never seen.

Kamla had just entered her twelfth year, and, to mark the occasion, Grandmother had let out the girl's pigtails and tied her shiny black hair with a green ribbon. She still wore a tunic in preference to the kurta-pyjamas worn by most north Indian girls.

Kamla's parents lived in Manchester, where her father was a doctor in a large hospital. She went to school in England. But this year, during the summer holidays, she had come to India to stay with her Grandmother. Apart from a servant-maid and a grizzled old night-watchman, Grandmother lived quite alone, in a small house on the outskirts of Jaipur. During the winter months, Jaipur's climate was cool and bracing; but in summer, a fierce sun poured down upon the city from a cloudless sky.

Sometimes, during the day, Kamla joined the neighbours' children in flying kites from the roof-tops, or

playing hop-scotch in shady side-streets. At night, before she went to sleep, Grandmother would tell her stories about wise birds and talkative animals, and the gods and goddesses of old. This dreamland created by Grandmother was far more exciting than the programmes they sometimes saw on the TV.

None of the other children ventured across the main road into the fields of millet, maize, paddy and young sugar-cane. But Kamla was determined to visit the fields before she returned to England. From the flat roof of the house she could see the fields stretching away for miles, the young maize swaying in the hot wind. Finally, when there were only two days left before she went to Delhi to board a plane for London, she made up her mind and crossed the main road.

She did this in the afternoon, when Grandmother was asleep and the servants had gone to the bazaar. She slipped out through the back door, and her slippers kicked



up the dust as she ran down the path to the main road. A bus roared past, and more dust rose from the road and swirled about her. Kamla ran through the dust, past the jacaranda trees that lined the road, and into the fields.

Suddenly, the world became an enormous place, bigger and more varied than it had seemed from the air, also mysterious and exciting—and just a little frightening.

The sea of maize stretched away till it merged with the hot blinding blue of the sky. Far to her left were a few trees and the low white huts of a village. To her right lay hollow pits of red dust and a blackened chimney, where bricks used to be made. In front, some distance away, Kamla could see a camel moving round a well, drawing up water for the fields. She set out in the direction of the

camel. Grandmother had told her not to wander off on her own in the city; but this wasn't any city, and as far as she knew camels did not attack people.

It took her a long time to get to the camel. It was about half a mile away, though it seemed much nearer. And when Kamla got to it, she was surprised to find that there was no one else in sight. The camel was turning the wheel by itself, moving round and round the well, while the water kept gushing up in little trays to run down the channels into the fields. The camel took no notice of Kamla, did not look at her even once, just carried on about its business.

There must be someone here, thought Kamla, while walking towards a mango tree that grew a few yards away. Ripe mangoes dangled like globules of gold from the branches of the tree. Under the tree, fast asleep, was a boy.

All he wore was a pair of dirty white shorts. His body had been burnt dark by the sun; his hair was tousled, his feet chalky with dust. In the palm of his outstretched hand was a flute. He was thin, with long bony legs, but Kamla felt that he was strong too, for his body was hard and wiry. Kamla went nearer to the sleeping boy, peering at him with some curiosity, for she had not seen a village boy before. Her shadow fell across his face. The coming of the shadow woke the boy. He opened his eyes and stared at Kamla. When she did not say anything, he sat up, his head a little to one side, his hands clasping his knees, and stared at her.

“Who are you?” he asked a little gruffly. He was not used to waking up and finding strange girls staring at him.

“I’m Kamla,” said Kamla. “I’ve come from England, but I’m really from India. I mean I’ve come home to India, but I’m really from



England." This was getting to be rather confusing, so she countered with an abrupt: "Who are you?"

"I'm the strongest boy in the village," said the boy, deciding to assert himself without any more ado. "My name is Romi. I can wrestle and swim and climb any tree."

"And do you sleep a lot?" asked Kamla innocently.

Romi scratched his head and grinned.

"I must look after the camel," he said. "It is no use staying awake for the camel. It keeps going round the well until it is tired, and then it stops. When it has rested, it starts going round again. It can carry on like that all day. But it eats a lot."

Mention of the camel's food reminded Romi that he was hungry. He was fast growing these days, and was nearly always hungry. There were some mangoes lying beside him, and he offered one to Kamla. They were silent for a few minutes. You cannot suck mangoes and talk at the same time. After they had finished, they washed their hands in the water from one of the trays.

"There are parrots in the tree," said Kamla, noticing three or four green parrots on the topmost branches: conducting a noisy meeting they reminded her a bit of a pop group she had seen and heard in Manchester.

"They spoil most of the mangoes," said Romi.

He flung a stone at them, missing, but they took off with squawks of protest, flashes of green and gold wheeling in the sunshine.

"Where do you swim?" asked Kamla.

"Down in the well?"

"Of course not. I'm not a frog. There is a canal not far from here. Come, I will show you!"



As they crossed the fields, a pair of blue-jays flew out of a bush, rockets of bright blue that dipped and swerved, rising and falling as they chased each other.

Remembering a story that Grandmother had told her, Kamla said, "They are sacred birds, aren't they? Because of their blue throats." She told him the story of the god Siva having a blue throat because he had swallowed a poison that would have destroyed the world; he had kept the poison in his throat and would not let it go further. "And so his throat is blue, like the blue-jay's."

Romi liked the story. His respect for Kamla was greatly increased. But he was not to be outdone, and when a small grey squirrel dashed across the path, he told her that squirrels, too, were sacred. Krishna, the god who had been born into a farmer's family like Romi's, had been fond of squirrels and would take them in his arms and stroke



them. "That is why squirrels have four dark lines down their backs," said Romi. "Krishna was very dark, as dark as I am, and the stripes are the marks of his fingers."

"Can you catch a squirrel?" asked Kamla.

"No, they are too quick. But I caught a snake once. I caught it by its tail and dropped it in the old well. That well is full of snakes. Whenever we catch one, instead of killing it, we drop it in the well! They can't get out."

Kamla shuddered at the thought of all those snakes swimming and wriggling about at the bottom of the deep well. She wasn't sure whether she wanted to take a look at the well with him. But she forgot about the snakes when they reached the canal.

It was a small canal, about ten metres wide, and only waist-deep in the middle, but it was very muddy at the bottom. She had never seen such a muddy stream in her life.

"Would you like to get in?" asked Romi.

"No," said Kamla. "You get in."

Romi was only too ready to show off his tricks in the water. His toes took a firm hold on the grassy bank, the muscles of his calves tensed, and he dived into the water with a loud splash, landing rather awkwardly on his belly. It was a poor dive, but Kamla was impressed.

Romi swam across to the opposite bank and then back again. When he climbed out of the water, he was covered with mud. It made him look quite fierce. "Come on in," he invited. "It's not deep."

"It's dirty," said Kamla, but felt tempted all the same.

"It's only mud," said Romi. "There's nothing with mud. Camels like mud. Buffaloes love mud."

"I'm not a camel—or a buffalo."

"All right. You don't have to go right in. Just walk along the sides of the canal."

After a moment's hesitation, Kamla slipped her feet out of her slippers, and crept cautiously down the slope till her feet were in the water. She went no further, but even so some of the muddy water splashed on to her clean white dress. What would she tell Grandmother? Her feet sank into the soft mud, and she gave a little squeal

as the water reached her knees. It was with some difficulty that she got each foot out of the sticky mud.

Romi took her by the hand, and they went stumbling along the side of the canal while little fish swam in and out of their legs, and a heron, one foot raised, waited until they had passed before snapping a fish out of the water. The little fish glistened in the sun before it disappeared down the heron's throat.

Romi gave a sudden exclamation and came to a stop. Kamla held on to him for support.

"What is it?" she asked, a little nervously.

"It's a tortoise," said Romi. "Can you see it?"

He pointed to the bank of the canal, and there, lying quite still, was a small tortoise. Romi scrambled up the bank and, before Kamla could stop him, had picked up the tortoise. As soon as he touched it, the animal's head and legs disappeared into its shell. Romi turned it over, but from behind the breast-plate only the head and a spiky tail were visible.

"Look!" exclaimed Kamla, pointing to the ground where the tortoise had been lying. "What's in that hole?"

They peered into the hole. It was about a foot deep, and at the bottom were five or six white eggs, a little smaller than a hen's eggs.

"Put it back," said Kamla. "It was sitting on its eggs."

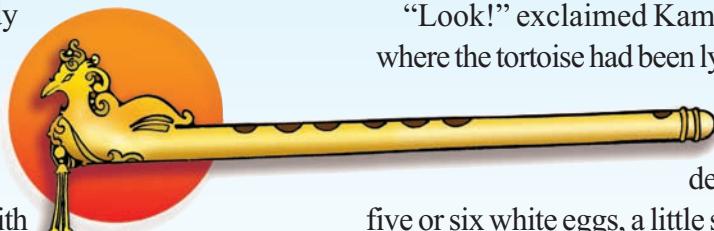
Romi shrugged and dropped the tortoise back in its hole. It peeped out from behind its shell, saw the children were still present, and retreated into its shell again.

"I must go," said Kamla. "It's getting late. Grandmother will wonder where I have gone."

They walked back to the mango tree, and washed their hands and feet in the cool clear water from the well; but only after Romi had assured Kamla that there weren't any snakes in the well—he had been talking about an old disused well on the far side of the village. Kamla told Romi she would take him to her house one day, but it would have to be next year, or perhaps the year after, when she came to India again.

"Is it very far, where you are going?" asked Romi.

"Yes, England is across the seas. I have to go back to my parents, and my school is there, too. But I will take the plane from Delhi. Have you ever been to Delhi?"



"I have not been farther than Jaipur," said Romi. "What is England like? Are there canals to swim in?"

"You can swim in the sea. Lots of people go swimming in the sea. But it's too cold most of the year. Where I live, there are shops and cinemas and places where you can eat anything you like. And people from all over the world come to live there. You can see red faces, brown faces, black faces, white faces!"

"I saw a red face once," said Romi. "He came to the village to take pictures. He took one of me sitting on the camel. He said he would send me the picture, but it never came."

Kamla noticed the flute lying on the grass. "Is it your flute?" she asked.

"Yes," said Romi. "It is an old flute. But the old ones are best. I found it lying in a field last year. Perhaps it was the god Krishna's! He was always playing the flute."

"And who taught you to play it?"

"Nobody. I learnt by myself. Shall I play it for you?"

Kamla nodded, and they sat down on the grass, leaning against the trunk of the mango tree, and Romi put the flute to his lips and began to play.

It was a slow, sweet tune, a little sad, a little happy, and the notes were taken up by the breeze and carried across the fields. There was no one to hear the music except the birds and the camel and Kamla. Whether the camel liked it or not, we shall never know; it just kept going round and round the well, drawing up water for the fields. And whether the birds liked it or not, we cannot say, although it is true that they were all suddenly silent when Romi began to play. But Kamla was charmed by the music, and she watched Romi while he played, and the boy smiled at her with his eyes and ran his fingers along the flute. When he stopped playing, everything was still, everything silent, except for the soft wind sighing in the maize and the gurgle of water coming up from the well. Kamla stood up to leave.

"When will you come again?" asked Romi.

"I will try to come next year," said Kamla.

"That is a long time. By then you will be quite old. You may not want to come."

"I will come," said Kamla.

"Promise?"

"Promise."

Romi put the flute in her hands and said, "You keep it, I can get another one."

"But I don't know how to play," said Kamla.

"It will play by itself," said Romi. She took the flute and put it to her lips and blew on it, producing a squeaky little



note that startled a lone parrot out of the mango tree. Romi laughed, and while he was laughing, Kamla turned and ran down the path through the fields. And when she had gone some distance she turned and waved to Romi with the flute. He stood near the well and waved back to her.

Cupping his hands to his mouth, he shouted across the fields: "Don't forget to come next year!"

And Kamala called back, "I won't forget." But her voice was faint, and the breeze blew the words away and Romi did not hear them. Was England home? wondered Kamla. Or was this Indian city the real home? Or was her true home in that other India, across the busy trunk road? Perhaps she would find out one day.



*Uttaranchal, one of the newest States of India with its capital at Dehra Dun, was carved out of 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh in September 2000. This land of hills is an endless expanse of natural beauty and serenity. The State is known as 'Devbhumi' or the Land of Gods, since it is the abode of Gods and has many famous pilgrim centres like Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri.*

*With its imposing mountains and hill stations like Naini Tal, Mussoorie, Ranikhet and attractions like the Valley of Flowers, the region has for long been a popular draw for tourists, trekkers and pilgrims alike.*

*Uttaranchal is believed to have existed even before the Mahabharata period. Legend has it that the great epic was written here and it is believed that the Pandavas left for their heavenly abode from here.*

*The State is bordered by Nepal to the east, while the lower Himalayas separate China in the north. The States of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh border it in the west and northwest respectively. Most of the State is hilly and roughly, only 10 per cent of the total region is plains. Many rivers like the Ganga, Yamuna, Bhagirathi and Alaknanda originate from this State.*

*Uttaranchal is spread over an area of 55,845 sq km and has a population of 8,479,562. Hindi, Garhwali, and Kumaoni are the principal languages.*

## All because of a cat

**Q**uia a small cottage by the foothills of Pauri lived an old couple. They had a son called Negi. Negi was not a very smart lad. He was very innocent and naive. His innocence made him gentle and, with his small dark lively eyes and gentle manners, he was also quite attractive.

A small brook flowed by the side of their house and more often than not Negi would spend his time sitting by it and playing a small lute. The goats would graze nearby while the *Hilsa* would flash by, their silvery fins dazzling in the sun. The animals and birds became used to his presence and since he did nothing to scare them, they had no fear for him.



But the old couple worried about Negi. They felt that Negi would not be able look after himself after their death.

“What will happen to our Negi? Who will look after him?” asked the old woman to her husband, as she collected eggs from their chicken coop. Her husband, who was milking the goats, looked up. But he did not answer. His face was all craggy and lined. His eyes looked across the snow-capped mountains, yet looking at nothing. From a distance, the gentle valley breeze carried the dulcet tones of Negi’s lute.

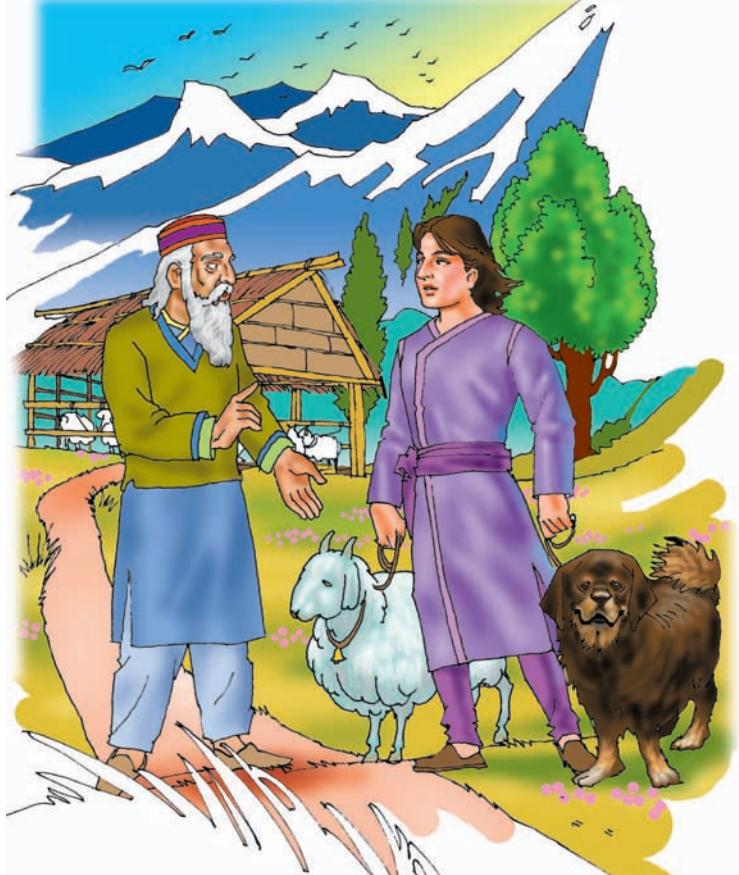
That night the old man could not sleep. He tossed and turned in his bed and the sheets entwined like a python strangling his legs. He got up early in the morning and nudged his son awake. “Negi, wake up, I want to tell you something.”

Negi woke up and rubbed the sleep from his eyes. It was nearing dawn and the hills were slowly coming alive. The crowing of the cocks rent the air while the early birds were chirping in the trees.

Negi followed his father to the goat shed. The old man came out leading a woolly mountain goat and a Bhutia (sheep dog). Negi looked at the goat. It was his mother’s pet goat, Bul-bul. Bul-bul had a tiny bell around its neck and she was a plump goat as Negi’s mother would handfeed her with choicest delicacies.

“Take Bul-bul and go and seek your fortune, my son,” said the old man. “But there’s one condition — you must not sell the goat or kill it and sell the meat. And when you return, you must come back with some money.”

Negi nodded his head. He took the goat and after touching his parents’ feet left home. He climbed the small hill and left the valley. Bul-bul followed slowly nibbling at



the juicy stalks on the way, while the Bhutia watched warily for predators, yapping at Bul-bul’s legs, urging her ahead.

All day Negi followed the mountain path. He plucked wild berries on the way and when he felt thirsty, drank from the cold mountain springs.

By evening, he had nearly crossed the mountain. The sun was setting and Negi sat under a huge deodar tree and rested his back against its trunk. He looked at Bul-bul who sat placidly by him, chewing her cud. “I wonder what father meant by saying I am not to sell you or kill you for meat. How do I get money if I can’t do either of the two?”

## Jim Corbett National Park

India’s first National Park, the Corbett National Park, is spread over an area of 520 sq km. The park was established in 1935 as the Hailey National Park after the Governor of the erstwhile United Provinces. It was later renamed the Corbett National Park in 1957, after the legendary naturalist-hunter-author Jim Corbett.

The Park is spread over the two hill districts of Pauri Garhwal and Naini Tal. Spread on the banks of the river Ramganga, the Park has an artificial lake formed by damming the river. The Park, with its dry deciduous forest, is rich in biodiversity. In addition to protected wildlife like the tiger, elephant, barking deer and sambar, there are more than 110 species of plants and 600 species of birds listed here.

In fact, the first Project Tiger conservation programme was launched from this Park in 1973.



He stroked the Bhutia's head as the huge dog lay panting and occasionally stretched out his pink tongue to lick Negi's hand. Bulbul 'Baaa-ed' at him as if to say 'I too would lick your hand, if I could.'

Negi stretched himself on the grass and between Bulbul and the Bhutia. He lay contended, sheltered from the chill of the night. The next morning, the shrill chirping of birds woke him up and he opened his eyes to see that the Bhutia had scared a cat up the tree.

The cat was mewing pitifully, while below the Bhutia's tail was wagging furiously as he growled low with excitement. Just then he heard voices and immediately two girls emerged from behind some trees. Negi looked up in surprise; so too did the girls. They were not expecting to see anyone about and they stopped curiously. Suddenly, the younger girl spotted the cat on the tree and rushed towards it.

Negi got up hurriedly and dragged the Bhutia away while the girl reached out for the cat and picked him up.

The older of the two approached the dog and gently reached out to pet his shaggy head. "We didn't expect to see anyone here. Are you here all alone?" she asked.

"No, I'm here with Bulbul my goat and my Bhutia," replied Negi.

"What's your name?" she asked.

"Negi."

Negi meanwhile was looking at the two girls. Both were very pretty and he liked the older girl on sight. When she smiled, which was frequent, two dimples appeared on her cheeks. "My name is Shama" she said and, pointing to her younger sister, "she is Neeraja".

Negi thought that the names were very apt for two beautiful girls. Shama meant a flame, while Neeraja was the lotus flower.

Negi accompanied them to their house. He borrowed a vessel and milked Bulbul. Then the three of them sat down to have breakfast of *aloo parantas* and goat's milk.

Time passed. Negi knew he could not stay there forever. He had to think of some way of getting some money. He felt sad. The emotions showed on his face. Shama was quick to spot the worry lines.

"Why are you looking so worried, Negi?" she asked.

Negi could not wait to pour out his problems. He told her the whole story, including his father's condition.

Shama listened patiently. After Negi finished his tale, she threw back her head and laughed. Then she stroked Bulbul's head and said, "Why, that's very easy. Why don't you cut her woolly hair and sell it to the wool merchants? They will use it to make sweaters or even woollen carpets!"

Negi was struck by the simple answer. What an ideal way to satisfy his father's condition!

"Thank you, Shama, thank you," he shouted jumping for joy, "that idea never struck me!"

The same day, Negi took Bulbul to the nearby village and got her hair sheared. He collected the hair in a jute sack and took it to the wool merchants to get it weighed and sold. Bulbul's hair was soft and carefully combed. There was no matted hair to be discarded. The wool merchant knew that the soft wool would be ideal for sweaters and so he was quite happy to pay Negi a handsome price.

The next day Negi, Bulbul and the Bhutia literally crossed the mountain to return to their home. As soon as he reached home, he hugged his parents. He then carefully

untied a small bundle and took out currency notes and coins. His parents were overjoyed that he could come back with money so quickly.

"Did you come up with the solution yourself or did someone help you?" asked his father.

Negi answered quite truthfully, "Father, a young girl called Shama helped me. They live over the hill." The old couple exchanged silent looks.

"This girl Shama seems to be intelligent. She is the right person for our Negi," his mother cried. "She will take care of him after we're gone."

So, the next day, Negi's father travelled up the same path that Negi had taken. He went to Shama's house and arranged the marriage of Negi with her. Negi and Shama were married and they lived happily ever after. Even today, they would often tell their grandchildren how they met all because of a cat, a dog and a goat.

- Retold by B. Sumangal



## Noises in the night

There was a double-storeyed building which had been rented out. Mr. Das, an elderly librarian, occupied the ground-floor; the first floor was given to a young salesman, Ramesh. Both lived alone.

Mr. Das was a man of regular habits who liked to go to bed at 9. Ramesh used to come in only around 9.30. His bedroom was directly over Mr. Das's. He would invariably be woken up by the sound of Ramesh tramping about in his shoes. But worse was when Ramesh would throw himself on his cot, take off one shoe, and fling it with full force to one side. To poor Mr. Das, the noise of the shoe landing on the floor would sound like a thunderbolt! After a while, Ramesh would pull out the other shoe and repeat the performance.

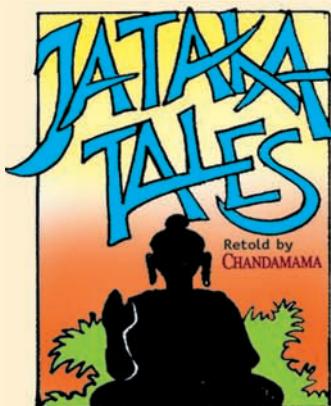
Mr. Das came to dread the noises made by the shoes. Things came to such a pass that he could not sleep until he had heard the sound of both shoes being thrown. One day he met Ramesh and told him how his sleep was being disturbed. Ramesh was all apologies, and promised to be careful.

That night, Ramesh lay down, pulled out one shoe, and flung it away as usual. Then he remembered his promise to Mr. Das. Taking off the other shoe, he placed it gently on the floor and retired for the night. Around midnight, Ramesh was woken up by a knock on his door. He staggered out and opened the door, to find a harassed Mr. Das.

"Yes, Sir?" asked Ramesh in surprise.

"Young man, would you please, *please*, throw the other shoe quickly, so that I can sleep? I'm going mad with anxiety, waiting for it!" said Mr. Das.





King Brahmadatta of Benaras hated old people for no reason at all. He and his men enjoyed teasing and torturing elderly men and women.

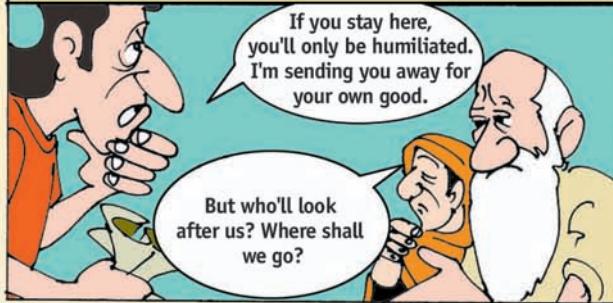


They made fun of them and made them dance and took away their food and water. They didn't spare even old animals and killed them.

Old buildings, old carts and all other old things were broken down and torn apart.



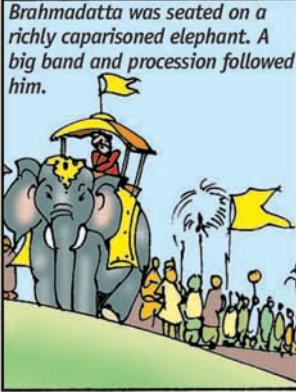
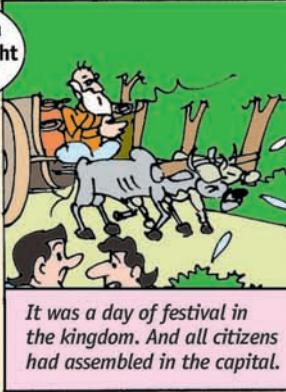
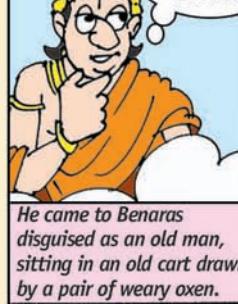
At last the people of the kingdom started sending their aged parents and other relatives away, so that they might not be harmed by the king.



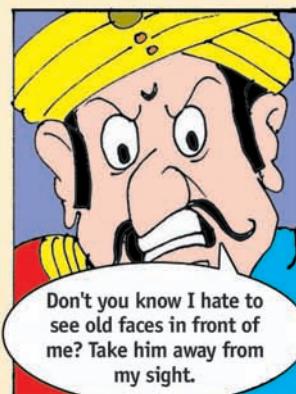
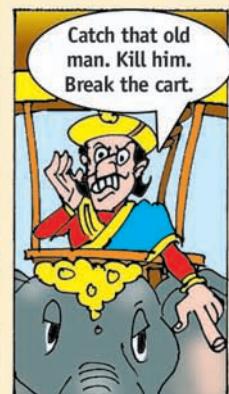
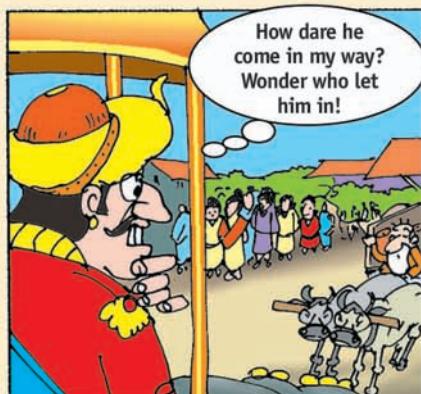
It was pathetic to see old men and women being forced out of their own homes. Saka, the King of Gods, saw this.



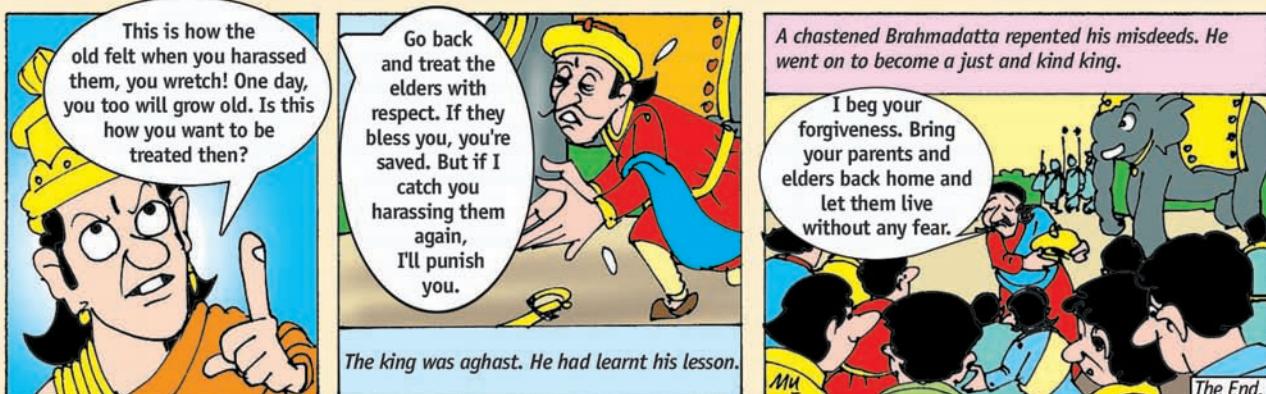
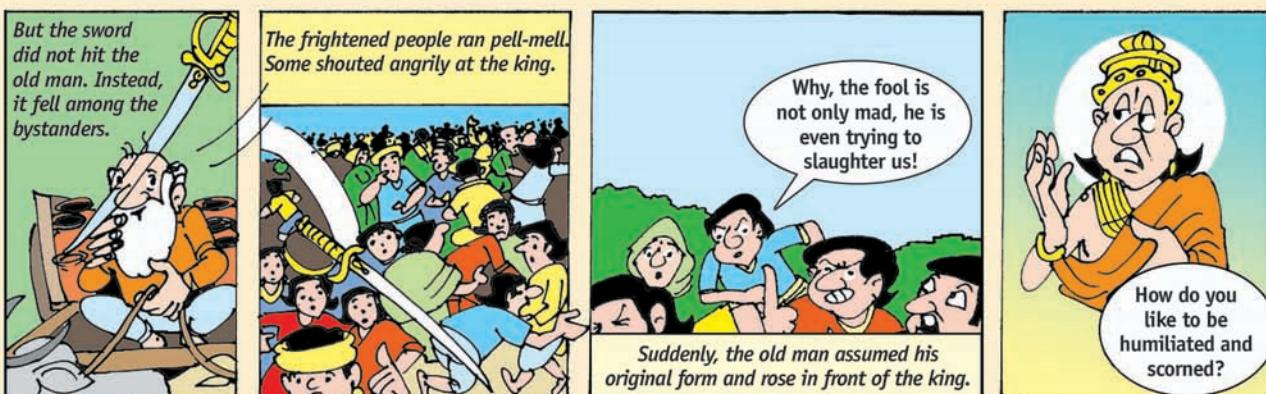
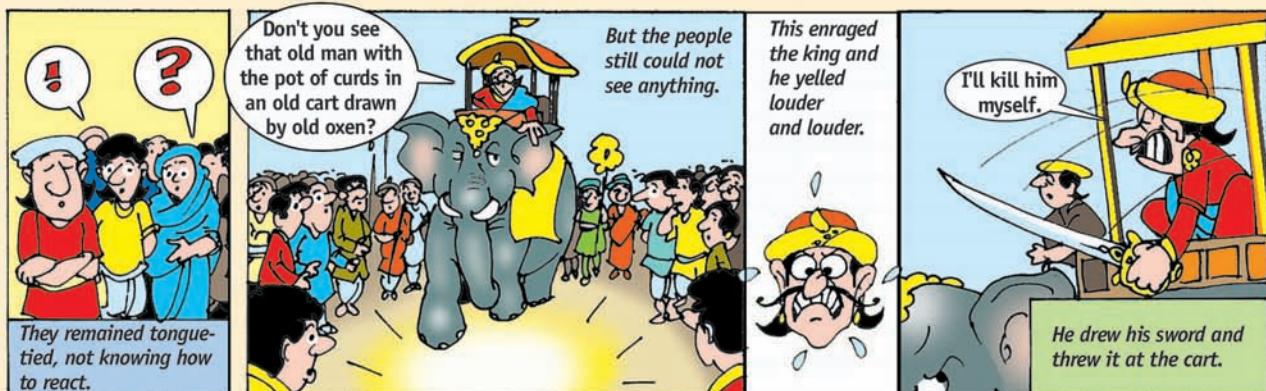
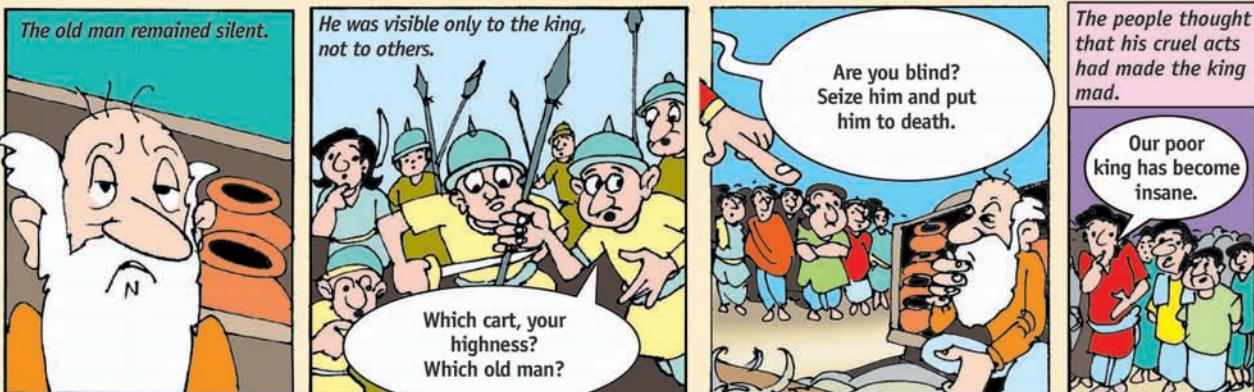
Brahmadatta has to be taught a lesson.



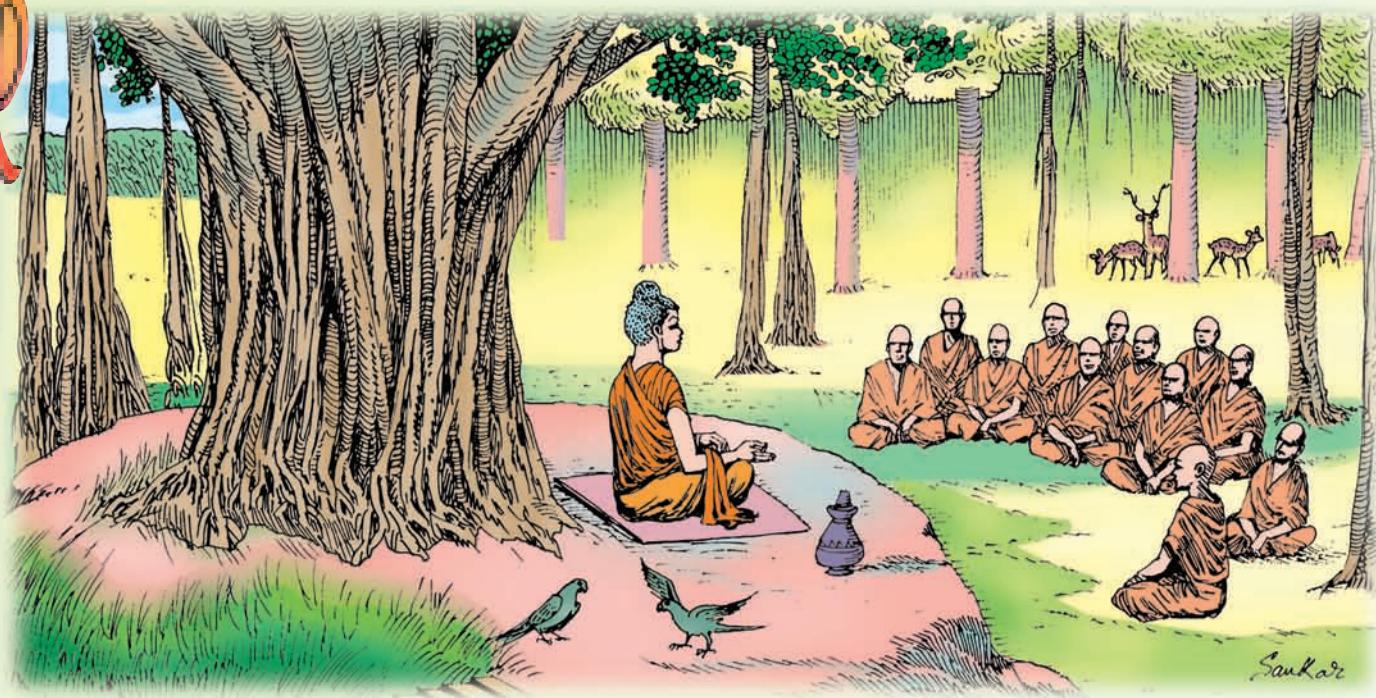
Now the old man on the old cart drove headlong into the king's procession.



Don't you know I hate to see old faces in front of me? Take him away from my sight.



# The stranger and the fruit



**A** new monastery had come up near the vast green grove at Sarnath, not far from the ancient holy city of Varanasi. The villagers around Sarnath were surprised to learn that the man who founded the monastery was none other than the son of the King of Kapilavastu, Prince Gautam, who was now called the Buddha by his disciples.

The Buddha and his disciples led an extremely ascetic life. After a session of meditation in the morning, some of them walked away in different directions. If one went into a village in the north, another entered a village in the west. They called themselves Bhiksus or mendicants. A mendicant would stand in front of a house till the householder had seen him. The bowl in the Bhiksu's extended hand would indicate that he expected alms. Normally the householder would put rice or some other food into the bowl. But if he waved negatively, the mendicant would quietly move away to the next house.

Sometimes the villagers and people from the holy city, out of curiosity, visited the monastery which its residents called the Vihara, and marvelled at the Master, the Buddha. He explained his philosophy to his disciples and answered questions put to him by the seekers. He did so with so much compassion and in a manner that was so serene and

loving that visitors stood gazing at him for hours even when they did not fully understand what he said.

Not very far from Sarnath lived a rich moneylender. He had never cared to visit the Vihara nor met the Buddha. In fact he had grown an acute aversion towards him. If all the people accepted what the Buddha taught, they would lose all interest in their worldly activities. They would not care to earn money. If money became unnecessary, what would happen to his own business? The more he pondered this question, the greater was his anger towards the Buddha.

It was a bright morning. The moneylender was going for a bath in the river when he saw a young mendicant standing before his gate. He lost his temper almost instantly. He could have simply waved his hand and the mendicant would have departed quietly. But he was determined to teach the young man a lesson.

“Look here, fellow, at last I got a chance to tell you what you are. You’re a vagabond, a good-for-nothing tramp, a vagrant. Do you understand?” he shouted. But the mendicant said nothing. That infuriated the man even more. He took another step forward and raising his clenched fist menacingly, shouted again, “I know your

master, Prince Gautam. He is a fool, an idler. And you, his disciple, you're worse!"

By and by the man grew so excited that he went on heaping on the stranger every word of abuse that was known to him. He went on and on. Passers-by stopped, puzzled at his outburst. That encouraged him further. He raised his voice to the highest pitch at his command and strained his nerves. He went on like that almost for a full hour.

By then he felt exhausted. He had come quite close to the mendicant. A closer look at that bright, calm figure began to cast a spell on him. And soon he became conscious of the fact that all that time the stranger had not spoken a single word; the quiet man had not shown the slightest reaction to his unprovoked tirade.

Still trying to keep up his temper, he demanded, "What makes you keep silent? Why don't you say something?"

The mendicant smiled. He brought out a fruit from his shoulder bag and showed it to the moneylender. "My friend," he asked, "suppose I offer this fruit to you, but you refuse to accept it. Where would it go?"

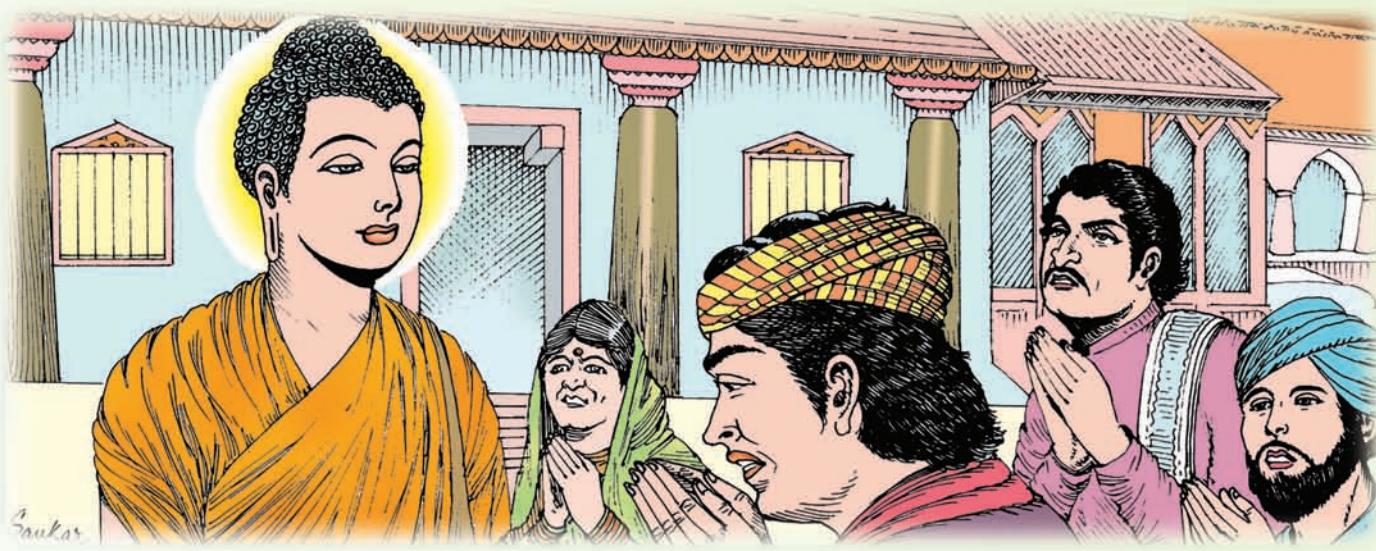
"What do you mean by asking where it would go? It would remain with you! Common sense!" answered the man in a huff.

"Right, my friend. May I say I have not accepted whatever you said. So, you know where they still are."

The man received the shock of his life. He realised that all his abuses remained with himself. The filthy words did not touch the stranger. Indeed, the mendicant's face showed no sign of the slightest annoyance.

By then, some people had recognised the mendicant who was none other than the Buddha himself. They bowed to him. Amazingly, the moneylender too went closer and, trembling with a strange sensation of awe and reverence, bowed to him, too.

- *Visvavasu*



## Amazing Facts



Elephants are the only animals that can't jump.

A duck's quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why.



# THE BAG OF SPIRITS

There once lived a rich couple who named their son Jin Ho. They employed an old servant, Wan Kyun, to look after the growing boy. He loved listening to Wan Kyun who had a good stock of stories. They were about fearsome dragons and ferocious tigers; some, of course, were also about good fairies and lovely princesses; and valiant heroes and kind-hearted kings.

A peculiarity about these stories was, each of them had a spirit in it. Now, Jin Ho liked the stories so much that he did not want anybody else to hear the stories. Neither would he wish to narrate them to any of his friends, nor would he allow the servant to repeat them to others. All this meant the spirits had to remain captive.

The servant-cum-story-teller Wan Kyun improvised a leather bag with a drawstring at the top. It was hung on a wall in Jin Ho's bedroom. As he wanted to listen to a story before he went to bed every night, the servant would keep the bag on his lap and as he neared the end of the story, he would loosen the string just wide enough for the spirit of the story to jump in. The spirit could come out only if the same story was re-told to another. Wan Kyun ensured that the bag was firmly tied before he put it back on the wall.

This exercise went on for days, weeks, months and years. All this while no story was repeated to another by Jin Ho or Wan Kyun. And the spirits remained inside the bag, without any hope of getting released. In their excitement of narration and listening, neither Wan Kyun nor Jin Ho heard the grumbles from inside the leather bag.

Before anyone knew, Jin Ho turned fifteen. According to the custom in Korea of those days, Jin Ho had become an eligible bachelor ready for marriage. His affectionate parents found a lovely girl to be their daughter-in-law. She was Min Ji, the charming daughter of a rich merchant.

Soon it was the wedding day. Early morning Jin Ho and his father got ready to go to the bride's residence for the ceremony. Those who remained in the house got busy making preparations to receive the bride.

The old servant Wan Kyun, who had been left behind, went around the house as though he was supervising every detail. Once he happened to peep into Jin Ho's room. He thought he heard some murmur. He stayed back for a while intently listening, especially when he heard several voices. He went inside and looked around for intruders who might have sneaked in when nobody was present.



Suddenly his attention was drawn by the leather bag. It was shaking and quivering! He could now guess that the murmur of voices came from the spirits! Wan Kyun tiptoed up to the bag and kept his ears as close to the bag as possible. He heard the following conversation.

“The boy is getting married today. Now is our chance to take revenge, for keeping us suffocated. Let’s kill him. After he is no more, someone may open the bag and we’ll be free!”

“Yes, yes, let’s do that. But how?”

“Ah! I’m from a story about a poisoned well. I shall put the well on the path the boy will take on his way to the bride’s residence. He’ll feel thirsty, and when he sees the well, he’ll certainly stop for a drink. And then ... Ha! Ha! Ha!”

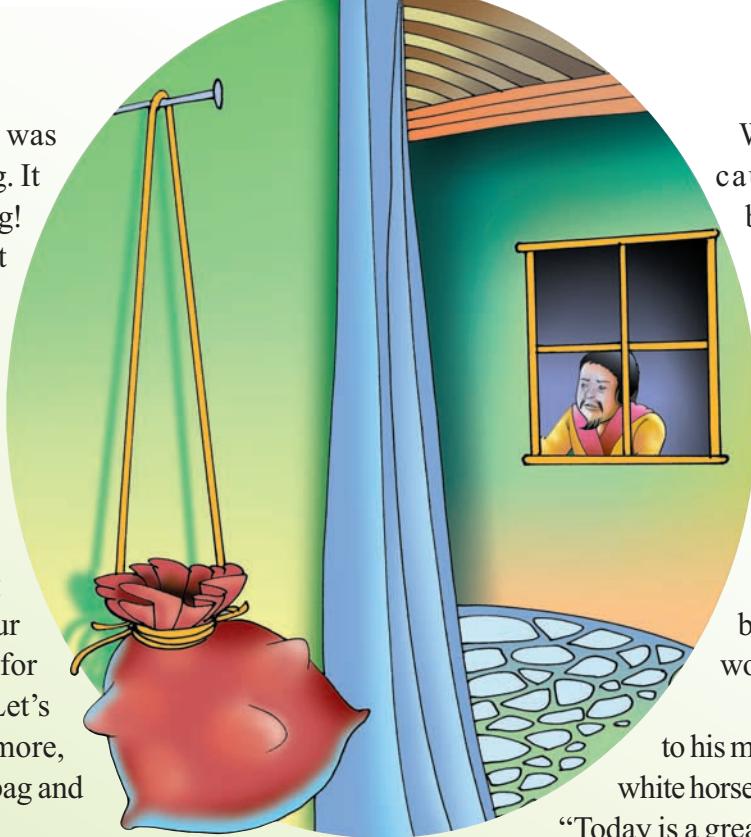
“Great! In case he doesn’t stop for a drink, I’m from a story of poisoned strawberries. I’ll hang so low on his way that he’ll be tempted to pluck a few and taste them. And then ... Ha! Ha! Ha!”

“If he reaches the bride’s house without a drink and without tasting strawberries, my story has a red-hot poker, which I’ll hide inside the silk cushion on which he’ll be stepping down at the door. And then. . .Ha! ha! Ha!!”

“And in case he escapes that, too, my story has a deadly snake that will curl beneath the bride’s bed. At night, it will come out and bite him. . .and then. . .Ha! Ha! Ha!”

“Good, good!” the other spirits said in a chorus.

Good old Wan Kyun, who was loyal to his master and affectionate to the boy he had been bringing up, was horrified when he listened to the conspiracy hatched by the spirits. He knew they were all inside the leather bag, but they had the power to manifest mischief.



Wan Kyun hurried out. He caught up with the bridegroom’s party, and went straight to Jin Ho who was riding a white horse.

“Young master, let me lead your horse today,” he said and caught hold of the bridle.

“No, Wan Kyun,” said Jin Ho. “Please go back home, you’ve a lot of work to do there!”

The servant now went up to his master, who too was riding a white horse. “Master, sir!” he pleaded.

“Today is a great day, and it is my dearest wish that I lead the young master’s horse!”

“All right, Wan Kyun,” said Jin Ho’s father, “you’ve my permission.”

Wan Kyun was very happy, not because he was given a prominent position in the wedding procession, but he was sure he could save his little master from any tragedy on the way.

Just as Wan Kyun had apprehended, when Jin Ho saw a well on the way, he halted and called for a cup of water. Wan Kyun wanted to prevent his young master from drinking the poisoned water. “Young master, it’ll take time to fetch water. And as you wait, you’ll sweat because the sun is quite hot, and your wedding clothes will get stained.”

Jin Ho was really thirsty, but he thought the servant had made a point. He spurred his horse to move on. After the procession had gone some distance, Jin Ho came upon luscious strawberries hanging low. “Ha! These can quench my thirst! Wan Kyun, please fetch me some strawberries.”

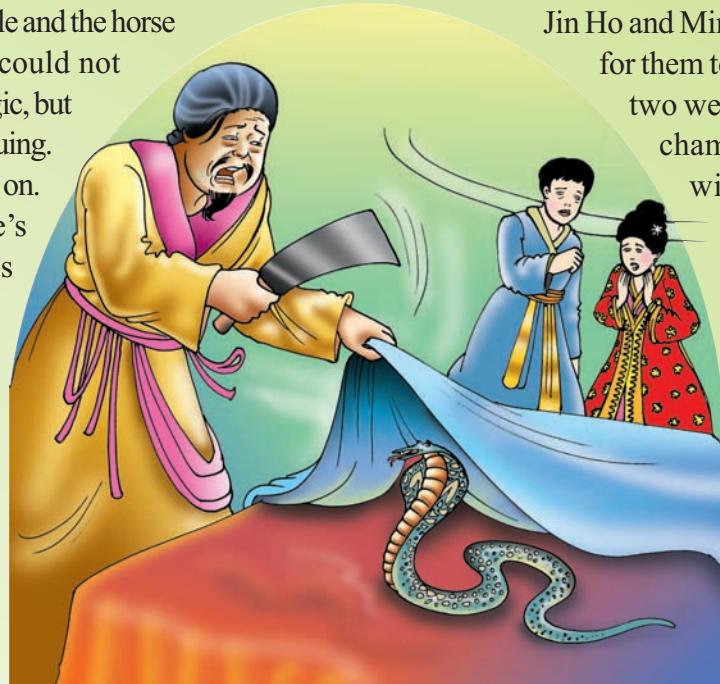
The servant put on a horrified look. “My young master!” he nearly pulled up Jin Ho. “Today is your wedding day, and you want to eat strawberries on the wayside when you know very well a feast awaits you at the bride’s residence?” He did not wait to see Jin Ho’s

reaction. He pulled the bridle and the horse moved forward. Jin Ho could not understand the servant's logic, but he wisely desisted from arguing.

The procession moved on. Soon, it reached the bride's residence. Two servants brought a silk cushion for the bridegroom to step on. Wan Kyun quickly snatched it away and said, "Look at this! It is so smooth, and my master may slip on it. Bring a wooden stool!" he commanded.

Jin Ho, his father, the bride's father everybody looked aghast at the audacity of a mere servant. However, before anything untoward could happen, somebody brought a wooden stool and Jin Ho dismounted, with Wan Kyun extending a helping hand.

The bridegroom's party moved to the decorated garden where a stage had been put up for the ceremony. Min Ji, the bride, clad in a rich robe and adorned with glittering jewels, sailed in and took her position on the stage. Soon the ceremony started. This was followed by a grand feast and some dancing, which both



Jin Ho and Min Ji joined. Now it was time for them to retire for the night. As the two were about to enter the bridal chamber, Wan Kyun rushed in with a long knife. Before anybody could guess what was happening, the old servant had pulled up the mattress and struck at the snake lying there. A gasp arose from the on-lookers. Jin Ho's father and Min Ji's father stepped forward.

"Father," said Jin Ho who had recovered his composure, "Wan Kyun has saved our lives!"

The servant waited till the next day when Jin Ho brought Min Ji home and they were all enjoying the feast. Wan Kyun went up to where the newly weds were seated and said, "I want to explain my strange acts of yesterday." And he told them about the spirits in the leather bag.

It was Min Ji who reacted first. She turned to her husband and said, "Jin Ho! From today, you tell me the stories and we'll release the spirits one after the other."

*-Retold by Rajee Raman*

## That's science for you

You would be surprised to know that the coin-operated machine - supposed to be a symbol of our age and times - was originally designed in ancient Greece, as a holy-water dispenser in temples! Its inventor was a scientist named Hero, who lived in Alexandria during the first century after the birth of Christ. The device consisted of an urn with a dispenser pipe leading out from the bottom. The upper end of the pipe was closed by a plug fixed to one end of a seesaw. When a 5-drachma coin was dropped into the slot on top of the urn, it slid down a chute on to the other end of the seesaw. For a few seconds the seesaw would tip, lifting the plug from the pipe and letting the water flow out. As soon as the coin fell into the bottom of the urn, the seesaw would right itself, closing the plug to stop the water flow. Slot machines of today work on a similar principle.



### THE FEARFUL BOY

Once upon a time, a boy called Raju and his mother lived in a village. He was a good boy. One day, he was angry with his mother. He shouted "I hate you" and ran up a hill. The voice echoed. Raju was afraid and ran back to his mother and told her about it. His mother told him to go back and shout "I love you". Raju did as she directed.

Then his mother told him " You're your echo".

**Moral : Don't get angry at anybody**

- C.A. Lokesh (7), Madurai



### MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE

During the summer holidays, our family drove down to Naini Tal with my friend's family in their car. We spent a nice time in Naini Tal. On our way back, we started at 8:30 in the night. I read a storybook for sometime, and then I slept. When I woke up, it was 11:00; we had stopped at a market to have tea. The roads were very dark and it was nearing midnight. Then we started and drove for sometime when suddenly thick smoke and sparks of fire came from the exhaust of my friend's car. My father overtook them and asked them to stop. They stopped immediately in a corner and we waited for sometime. We started again, but my friend's car would not move. We tried to stop a few vehicles passing by to ask for help. But nobody stopped. We had a rope, which we tied to their car and began towing it. We pulled it for 20 kilometres, and still we had to go 109 kilometres to reach Delhi. My father advised my friend's family to leave the car at a petrol pump and to bring it back the next day. We all sat huddled in our car, and we reached home at 5:30 in the morning. No one slept in the night, but our journey had become a memorable experience.



- Abhinav (10), New Delhi

## MY MOTHER

A lovely lady  
 Always smiles at me  
 Every day and night  
 She holds my hand  
 I love her very much  
 Yes, she is my loving mother



- Krishna R. Krishnan (8),  
 Ernakulam



## ON LIFE

Life is beautiful, when it is a flower,  
 Life is enchanting, when you feel its magic,  
 Life is entralling, when you act by its luck,  
 Life is entertaining, when you enjoy its laughter,  
 Life is a sun, its rays you are enlightened with  
 Life is a book, the pages you turn about,  
 Life is a contest, the prize you are bestowed with,  
 Life is a poem, the verses you glance through.

-R. Gopinath (13), Walajapet

**Teacher :** If I cut two apples, two bananas, and two mangoes into ten pieces each, and add ten cherries, what do I get?

**Student :** Fruit salad, Ma'am!



**O. Sandeep Reddy (12)**  
Korukonda



**Writer :** But you have had a year's experience since then.

**K. Chandra Sekhar (12)**  
Cuttack

**Writer :** Here's a short story that I had sent you last year.

**Editor :** Why have you brought it back? You know I had

rejected it.

**Writer :** Which do you consider as the most amazing thing in the world?



**V. Shweta Venkat (11)**  
Visakhapatnam

**Student :** How a black buffalo can give white milk!



**Visitor to Zoo :** Why is this elephant looking upset?

**Attendant :** The zoo vet has diagnosed that it is diabetic and we have taken away sugarcane and bananas from its diet.

**D. Sandhya Devi (13)**  
KGF

**Father :** Dear son, you must study well and earn a name, and then people in every corner of the earth will get to know about you.

**Son :** But, father, the earth has no corners!



**Sunita Paul (13)**  
Nayagarh

**Rita :** Why do we catch a cold only in our nose?

**Rani :** Because the nose is under the eyes (ice)!



**C.R. Ramakrishna (6)**  
Bangalore

# COUNTRIES GONE A-HIDING!

Find the countries hidden in these sentences:

1. I ran in a cross country race



2. The cub always remains with its mother.



- Anjali Gopal Gaur (11)  
Nashik

## HIDDEN BIRDS

3. Spot them horizontal, vertical and diagonal!

C	K	E	A	G	L	E	H	B
U	W	V	E	J	P	Z	S	P
C	A	O	S	T	R	I	C	H
K	H	D	G	U	Y	O	I	O
O	E	O	I	K	W	I	W	
O	A	V	Q	S	E	T	I	K
B	W	E	R	B	V	Y	O	T
N	O	L	F	A	L	C	O	N

- C.A. Lokesh (7), Madurai

3. Cuckoo, Hawk, Eagle, Ostrich, Dove, Kiwi, Kite, Falcon

2. Cuba

1. I ran

Answers :

# Buying trouble, the monkey way

In the village of Sholingur in Tamil Nadu there is a temple dedicated to Hanuman. It is on top of a small hill.

In and around the hill in the thick forests live a troop of monkeys. But they do not remain in the forest. They would get into the village and try to beg or steal food from the houses. They often scared the tourists and created trouble — even when people worshipped them as symbols of Hanuman. But there's a story behind why they create trouble....

It goes back a long time. In the village once lived an old couple. The old woman would make delicious sweets every day and take them to the market where her husband ran a stall and sold them.

The home made sweets were so popular that whoever came to the temple invariably stopped at the stall to buy them.

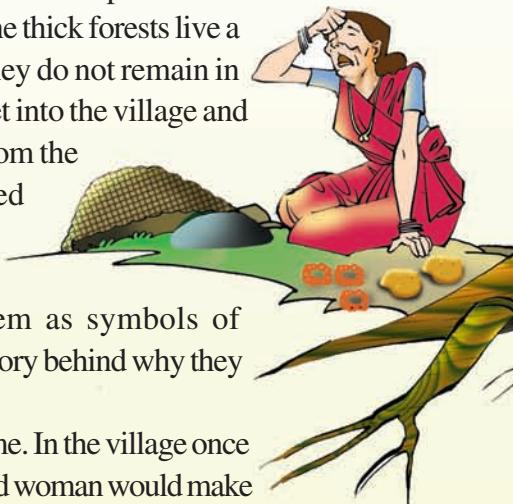
One day, on her way to the market, the old woman tripped over a stone and fell down. The basketful of sweets that she was carrying fell, too. The sweets lay scattered on the ground.

The old woman sank to the ground and wailed loudly "Look at the trouble I bought!" She started walking back home to get a fresh basket of sweets.

She did not know that she was being watched by a monkey. As soon as she left, the monkey swung down from the tree branch he was sitting on and came to examine the sweets.

He picked up one and smelt it. His eyes lit up. Food! It made his mouth water as he hadn't had any breakfast. He tucked into the sweet and found it delicious.

He gobbled up two pieces more. Looking around furtively, he stuffed five more in his mouth before the entire



gang arrived for their share. He grabbed another two for good measure and hurried up the tree. Whatever it was that the woman had called it was very tasty.

Then he remembered that the old woman had called it "trouble" (This was when monkeys could speak and understand human language.) For, when the sweets fell, she had wailed, "Oh look at the trouble I bought!"

He decided to go to the market and buy some more of that "trouble". He took the old woman's half broken basket and went to the market.

And whom should he bump into but the old man, who was waiting for his wife to turn up with the sweets? There was already a big crowd of people near his stall waiting for the sweets to arrive.

Ordinarily the old man would not have given the monkey a second glance. He knew monkeys were curious animals. But he saw the half broken basket that the animal was dragging and recognised it as the one in which his wife usually brought the sweets. Now he was very worried. Whatever would have happened to her?

He hurried after the monkey who was looking at everything wide-eyed. He did not know where

“trouble” was being sold but he was determined to find out.

Suddenly he saw the old man who was coming behind him. “Hey man! I wish to buy some trouble.”

The old man was puzzled. What did the monkey mean by wishing to “buy trouble?” He asked the monkey to explain.

“An old woman dropped this basket and said “Oh god! Look at the trouble I bought”. I tasted some and it was delicious and I want to buy some more.”

The old man thought and thought. At last he put two and two together. Then he looked at the monkey and asked, “Do you know what trouble is?”

Hungry and anxious to get away with his treasure before his pals looked out from nearby trees, he said tersely, “Yes! Give me all and double quick, you fool.”

The old man gave a lopsided grin at the monkey. He told the monkey to wait while he went in and packed some trouble for him. He soon came out dragging a large jute bag. The bag was tied at the mouth. He gave it to the monkey and reverently folded his hands together in prayer.

Ignoring the old man, the monkey took the bag, threw it across his shoulder and scampered away. The weight of the bag was killing. He was bent double, but the thought of the mouthwatering delicacies inside kept him going.

Soon the monkey was out of the village.

Tired of carrying the bag he decided to rest awhile. He could not resist the temptation of eating some trouble there and then.

With renewed energy he wiped the drool from his mouth and undid the strings that tied the bag. As the

strings fell away, two gaping mouths with ferocious teeth and savage growls leapt out.

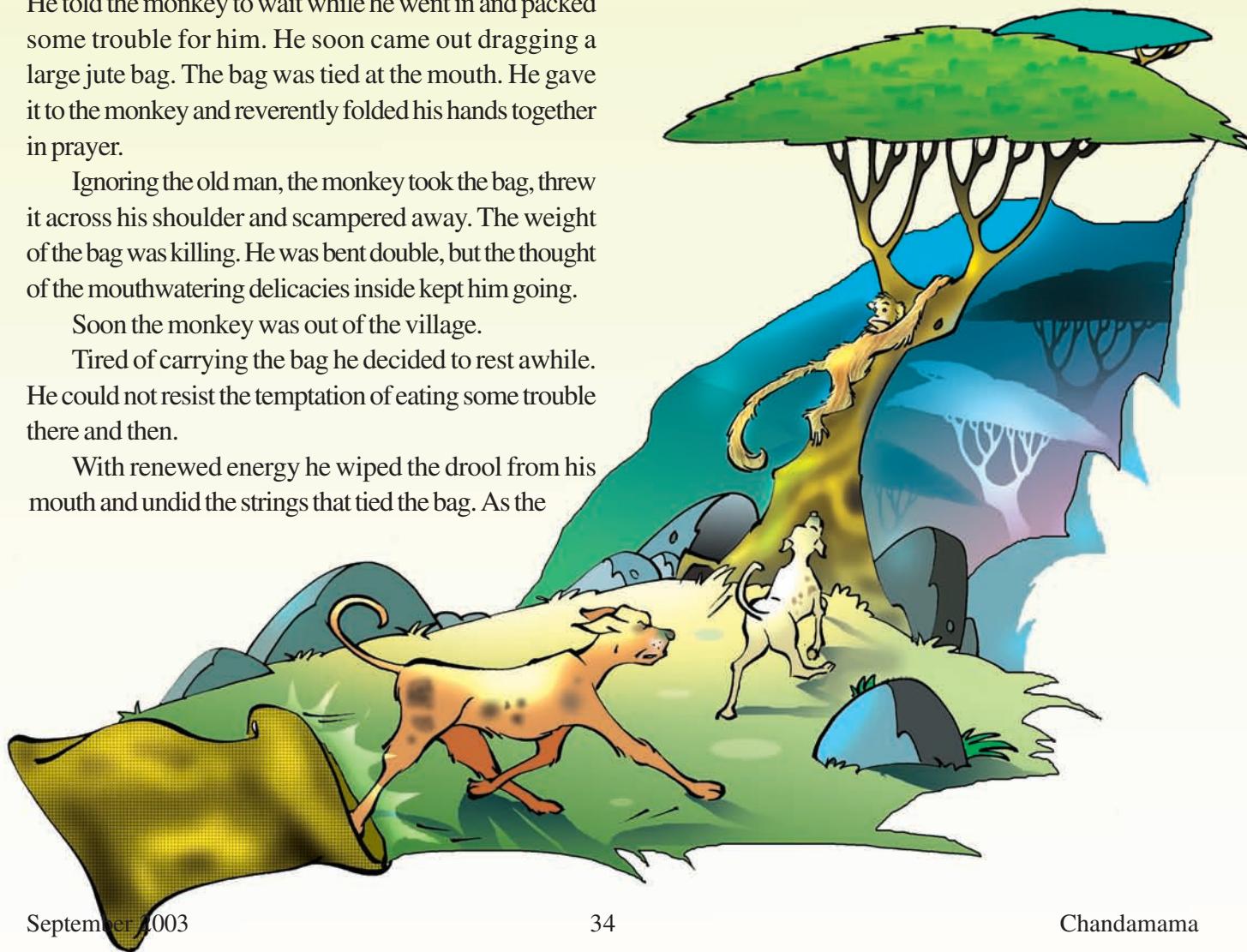
The monkey did not wait to investigate whom the mouth and claws belonged to. His heart was already in his mouth. With a leap higher than any he had taken in his life, he barely managed to reach the branch of the nearest tree.

As the monkey leapt up, the two dogs that had been released from the bag, jumped high to catch him. One of the dogs managed to get hold of the monkey’s tail that was still hanging down, and neatly snipped it off.

Howling in pain the monkey climbed higher and higher until the dogs were mere specks down below.

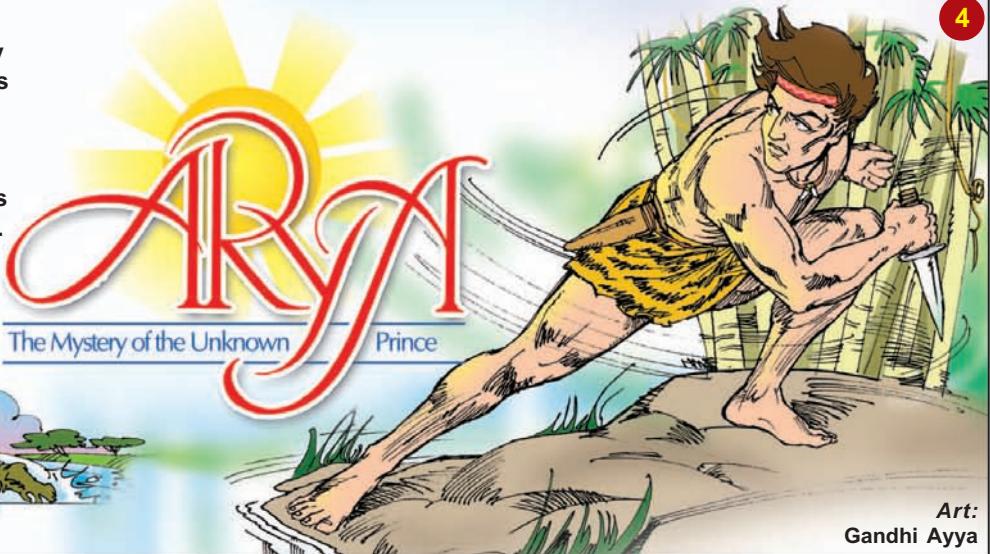
To this day, monkeys stay up in the trees and stay far away from trouble, but they do try to create trouble for humans - even when they are worshipped!

- *By B. Sumangal*



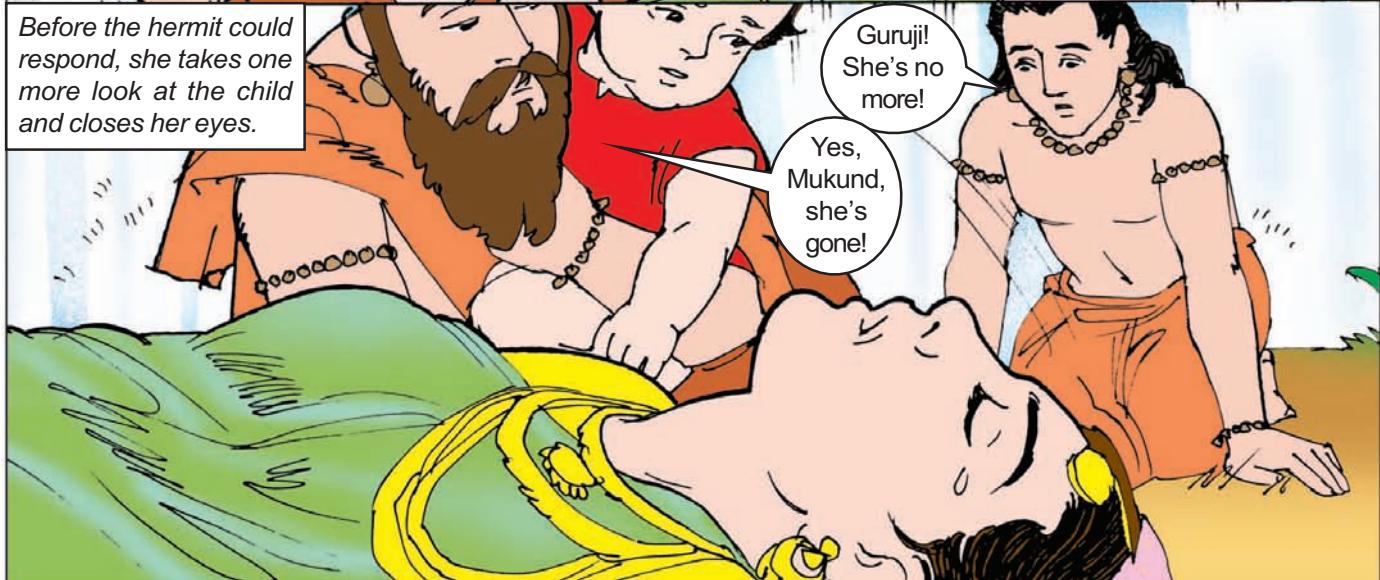
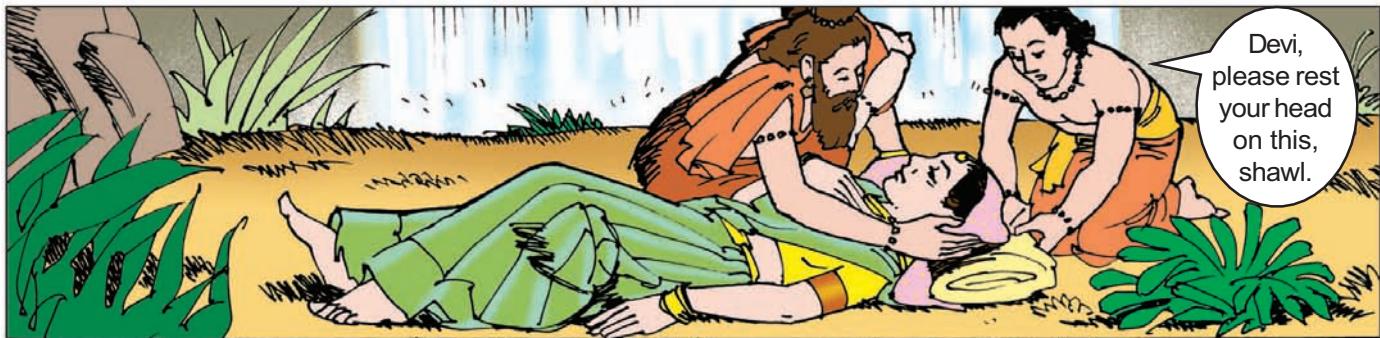
King Shantidev of Shantipur is informed about a conspiracy by General Vir Singh. The king asks the queen to escape with their infant son through a secret tunnel. After overcoming the General's men, Shantidev jumps into the river flowing by the fort. Hermit Jayananda stumbles upon a child.

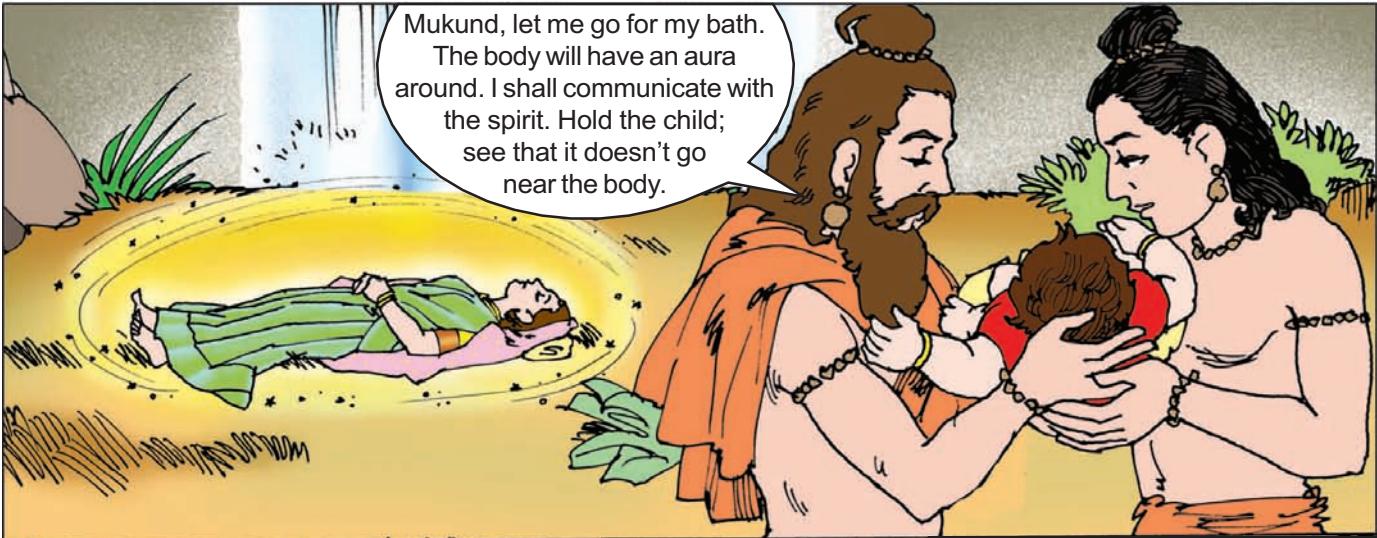
4



Art:  
Gandhi Ayya



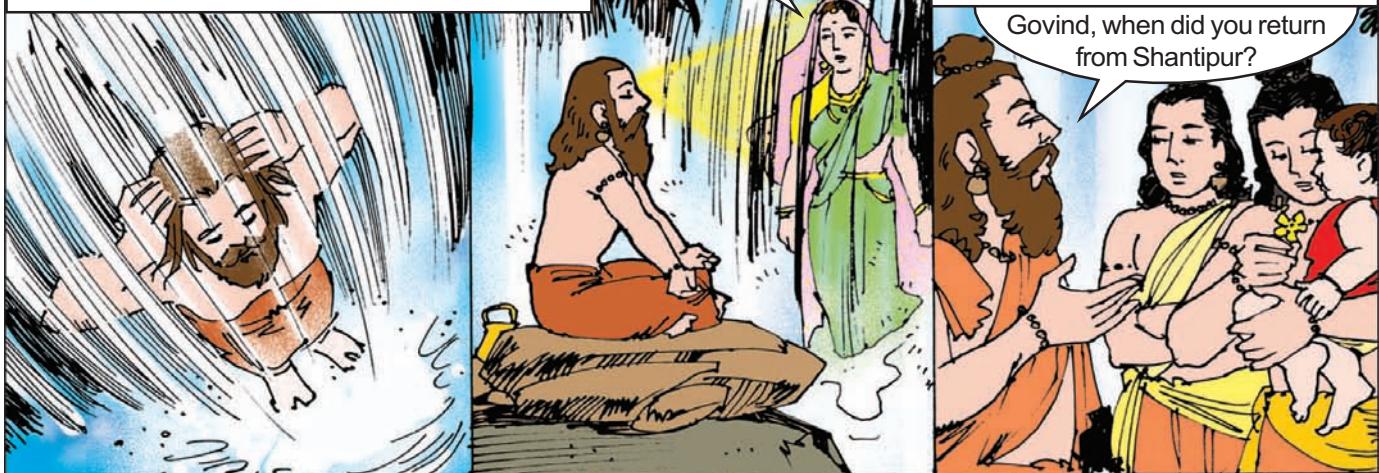




Jayananda moves towards the waterfall. After his bath, he sits in meditation when he has a vision of the woman.

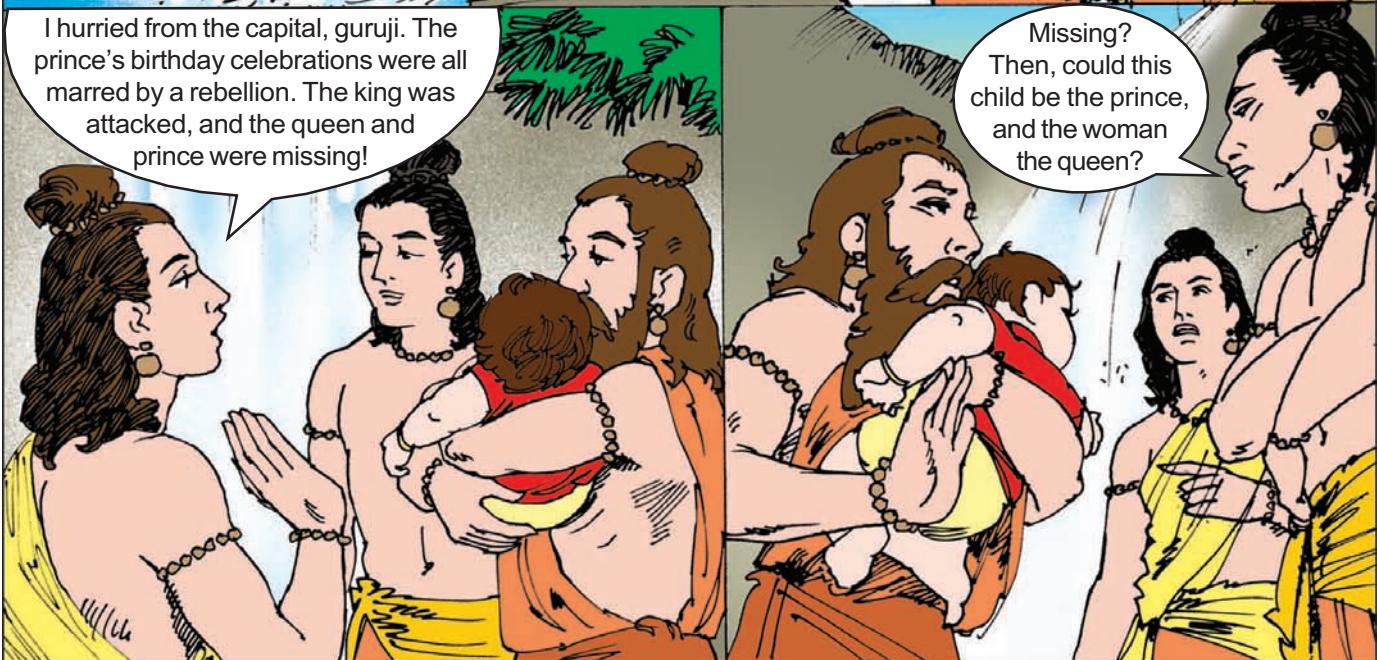
I'm Shantakumari, Queen of Shantipur...

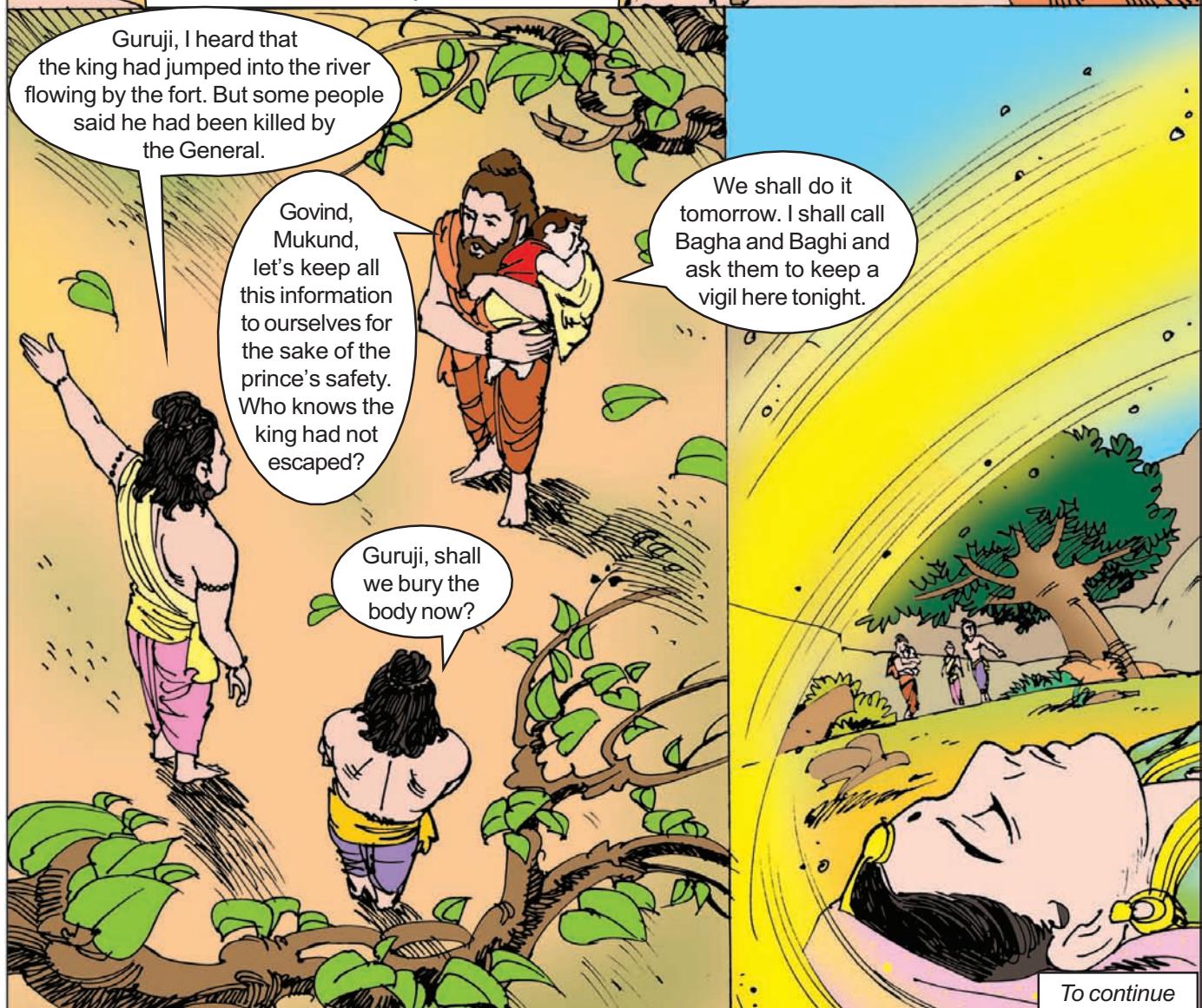
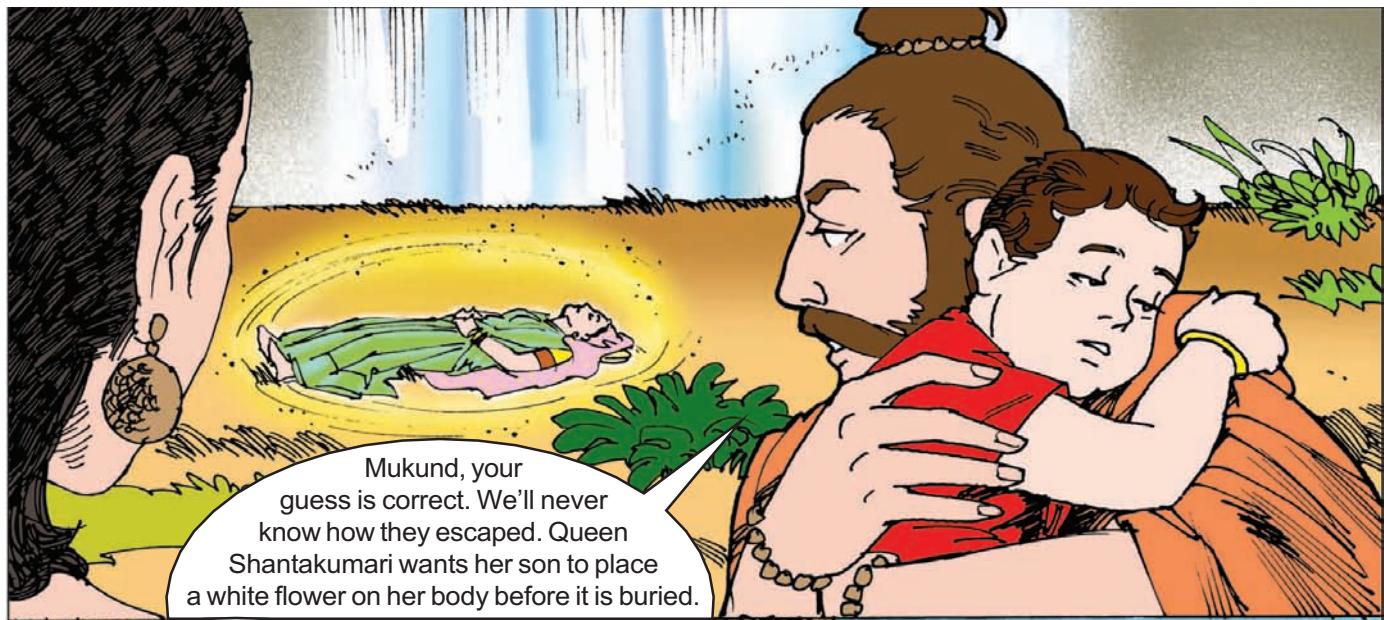
The hermit goes back to Mukund, who has by now been joined by another disciple.



I hurried from the capital, guruji. The prince's birthday celebrations were all marred by a rebellion. The king was attacked, and the queen and prince were missing!

Missing? Then, could this child be the prince, and the woman the queen?





# HOW PUSHKAR BECAME A LAKE

*All of you must be familiar with the name Pushkar, seven miles north of Ajmer, where the largest cattle fair in the country is held every year. The place gets its name from the sacred Pushkar lake which is crowded with pilgrims during the Kartik purnima (full moon day in the month of Kartik). There is an interesting story in the Padma Purana about how the lake was created and why it is considered sacred.*

One of the reasons why Pushkar became a place of pilgrimage is because the sacred Saraswati river, which is almost invisible, appears here in five streams. The more important reason is because Lord Brahma performed his famous yajna here. The story goes that Brahma felt depressed because he did not seem to have any particular hold over the world, like the others. All other gods and goddesses, such as Siva, Vishnu, Lakshmi and Parvati had ever so many temples dedicated to them. But there was none dedicated to himself!

So, Brahma decided to do something quite spectacular for the people of the earth. Something no one else had done before. He would make it easy for them to reach paradise and thereby secure a permanent place in their hearts. And, of course, get a very special temple dedicated to himself.

He decided to perform a yajna but he could not make up his mind about the venue. As he stood up, deep in thought, the lotus suddenly fell from his hand. He made up his mind then and there that he would perform the yajna where the lotus fell. As soon as the lotus touched the earth, water began to spout from the spot and soon



there was a lake. Brahma named the place Pushkar after the lotus. The lake was named Pushkar, too.

It was the month of Kartik. Brahma summoned the other deities and sages, allotting special duties to each of them for the yajna. He himself stood with the pot of *amrit* (nectar) on his head, waiting for his wife Savitri to arrive. The sacrifice could not commence without the presence of both. But Savitri refused to come because Lakshmi, Parvati and Indrani were not there to escort her. Brahma was very angry when he heard this and ordered Indra to find a bride for him on the spot. But the only girl Indra

managed to find was a Gujar, not a Brahmin. In the meantime, Brahma was getting quite impatient and livid because he was finding the pot of *amrit* very heavy. Indra solved the problem by passing the Gujar girl through a cow. Vishnu said it was a virtual rebirth for her and Siva named her Gayatri. So, Brahma married her and the sacrifice commenced. No sooner was it over than Savitri turned up, too. She was so angry to find her husband married to Gayatri that she refused to be pacified by Brahma or anyone else. She left the place in a huff and went up the hill on the north of the lake. A temple for Savitri stands there to this day. The pujari of the main Pushkar temple also attends to the worship at the Savitri temple.

To get back to the legend, the Pushkar lake became so holy after Brahma's *yajna* that anybody taking a dip there went straight to heaven. Even the worst of criminals were no exception! Before long, paradise became overcrowded. The deities complained that the earth was getting to be a really sinful place with no one caring about doing one's duty or being honest, because everyone knew that one had only to come to Pushkar and take a dip in order

to go to heaven and live happily thereafter. This made Brahma think again. He finally ordained that Pushkar would be holy for just five days in the year — the 11th day of Kartik until the full moon that followed.

With the advent of Buddhism, Pushkar, like Varanasi and Mathura, became a stronghold of Buddhism, fading into virtual oblivion with the decline of Buddhism. It became a pilgrim centre once again at the beginning of the 9th century AD under the Mandor dynasty. It is said that Narhar Rao, a famous Mandor king, was out hunting one day when he felt thirsty. He came to the Pushkar lake which had by then become a neglected pool and drank from it. He was amazed to find that the white spots on his wrist had vanished at the touch of the water. Sure of the healing quality of the lake, he sought to find its history. He restored the lake by constructing an embankment and built *dharmasalas* (free lodging) around it for people to stay.

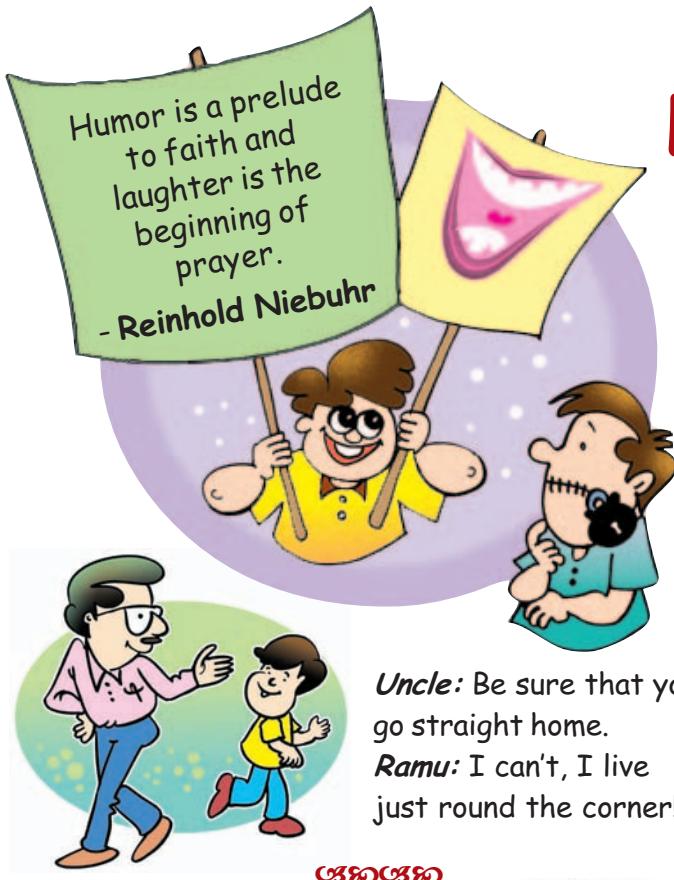
Later, the place which came into the possession of the Gujars, was won back by a group of sanyasis. They left their descendants in charge of the five main temples; they continue to look after them even now. The five temples at Pushkar are dedicated to Brahma, Savitri, Badri Narayan, Varaha, and Siva Atmaseswar. The Brahma temple is said to be the only one in the country dedicated to the Lord. The original temples were mostly destroyed by the Mughals. They were, however, reconstructed later and are comparatively modern.

Pushkar, surrounded by hills almost on all sides, is a beautiful place to visit. The Nag pahar or hill on the east deserves special mention because it is full of interesting old caves. Many of them are associated with great sages like Agastya, Kanya, and Bhartrihari. There is mention of Pushkar in both the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

Ram, Lakshman and Sita, as well as the Pandava princes are said to have visited it during their wanderings. Pushkar is mentioned in Jahangir's Memoirs, too, where he states that the cattle fair at Pushkar is the largest in India. The combination of legends and history, scenic beauty and religious sanctity, combine to give Pushkar an aura of its own. - *By Swapna Dutta*



# Laugh till you drop!



Humor is a prelude to faith and laughter is the beginning of prayer.

- Reinhold Niebuhr

**କୁଳାଳିତା**  
Man: Waiter, this egg is bad.



Waiter: Don't blame me sir, I only laid the table!

**କୁଳାଳିତା**



**କୁଳାଳିତା**  
Mother: What did you learn at school today?

Ajay: How to write.

Mother: What did you write?

Ajay: I don't know, they haven't taught us how to read yet!

**କୁଳାଳିତା**



**କୁଳାଳିତା**  
Tinku: Can you eat nuts, granpa?

Grandpa: No, Tinku I don't have enough teeth.

Tinku: Please keep this tin till I come back from school.

**କୁଳାଳିତା**  
Deepa: Mummy, Mummy, can I go out to play?

Mummy: With your new dress?

Deepa: No, with Shailaja next door.



## Dushtu Dattu

One day, when Dattu's mother is busy in the kitchen.



Mummy, come quickly! I've knocked down the ladder kept against the wall!



I'm busy.  
Run and tell your daddy!



But  
daddy knows  
already. He's  
hanging from  
the roof!

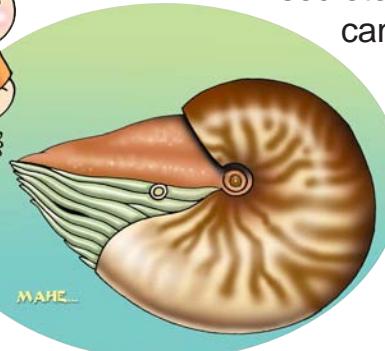


How

I wish I could withdraw into a shell, when I see my science teacher?



MAHE...



## Nautilus

The nautilus is a member of the Cephalopoda class of the molluscs. It is related to the octopus and the squid. The octopi and squid either do not have shells or are very small. The nautilus has a well-developed shell. The shells have many septa or walls. These walls divide it into rooms or chambers. The animal lives in the last chamber.

A cord of tissues run through the body of the animal. The cord secretes a gas. This gas makes the shell very light. The nautilus can swim rapidly. The foot of the nautilus is divided into as many as 94 tentacles. They have no suckers and are ringed. These are used to capture its preys. The tentacles are covered by a hood. When they withdraw their body and tentacles into their shell, the hood automatically closes the opening.

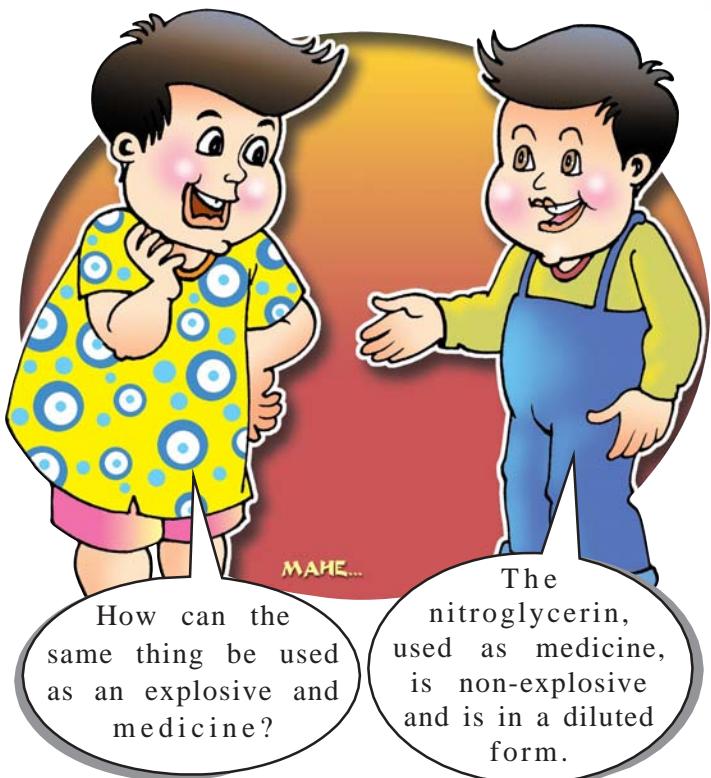
The nautilus is found near the surface of the sea. Crabs and lobster molds are its favourite food. Its reproduction is very slow. It lays only a dozen eggs in a year. A nautilus takes 5 to 10 years to attain maturity. The nautilus is hunted in large numbers for its shells. Because of this, its population has come down drastically.

## Nova

Nova is an unusual type of star. It becomes bright suddenly and stays bright for some duration. After that, it fades back to its former self. The sudden brightness is due to the release of tremendous energy. This happens at unpredictable intervals.

The energy is released in a nuclear explosion. The star remains unaffected after this. Nova occurs in a double star system with a large star and a comparatively smaller one. The larger star uses all its fuel fast. It cannot burn the heavier elements and hence swells into a red giant and blows away its outer layer. It is just left with a white dwarf star. The smaller star also reaches the same stage. When it swells up, the white dwarf absorbs energy from the outer layer of the star. The white dwarf star suddenly becomes very bright. The ancient astronomers took this bright star to be a new one and called it 'Stella Nova', meaning 'new star' in Latin. This is how novae got their name. Supernova is different from nova. It is 1,000 times more powerful and also destroys the star that triggers it.





## Nitroglycerin

Nitroglycerin is a powerful explosive. It is also called glyceryl trinitrate. It is the most important ingredient in the various forms of dynamite. In its pure state, it is a clear, colourless, oily, highly explosive liquid. It is a toxic liquid having a sweet and burning taste. It is very unstable compound and explodes at the slightest provocation. It is insoluble in water. It is soluble in ether, acetone, benzene, and chloroform. It decomposes when heated or jolted.

The molecular formula of nitroglycerin is  $C_3H_5(ONO_2)_3$ . It contains high nitrogen content. Nitroglycerin was first prepared by Italian chemist Ascanio Sobrero in 1846. It was first commercially produced by the Swedish chemist Alfred Nobel. He combined liquid nitroglycerin with an inert, porous material like charcoal or clay to develop dynamite. This was in 1867.

Nitroglycerin is a vasodilator – a drug that relaxes the muscles of the blood vessels and allows them to expand. It is used as a medication for heart ailments. Angina or heart pain is caused due to lack of oxygen and inadequate flow of blood to the muscles of the heart. Nitroglycerin dilates the veins and arteries and corrects the flow of blood and oxygen to the heart.

- Compiled by Vidhya Raj

## Activity

1. The energy that is formed when a nucleus is formed or broken – NUCLEAR \_\_\_\_\_
2. The joining or fusing of the nuclei of two light atoms is NUCLEAR \_\_\_\_\_
3. The device for controlling nuclear reactions is NUCLEAR \_\_\_\_\_
4. The study of manmade and natural nuclear reactions is known as NUCLEAR \_\_\_\_\_

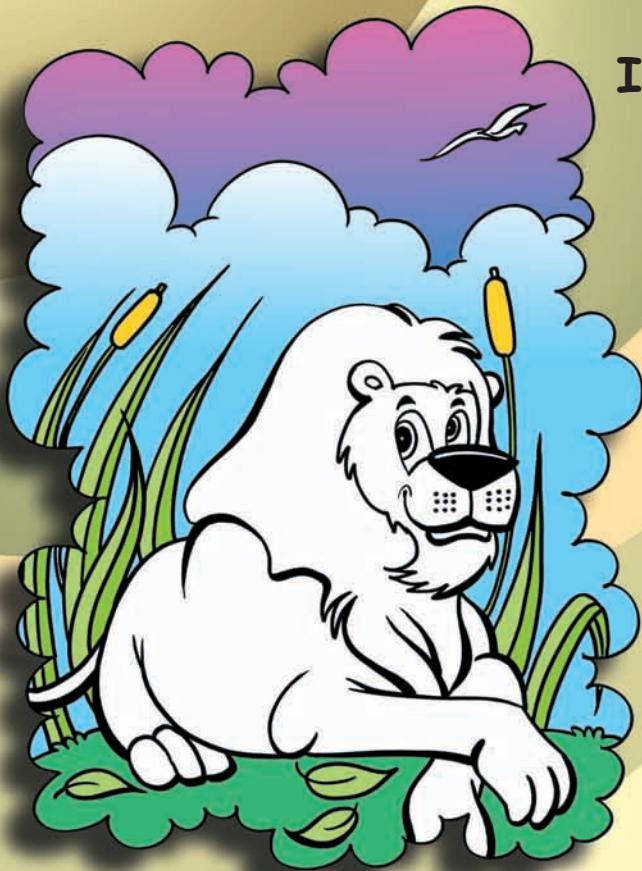
Given below are words that begin with the word 'nuclear'. Fill in the blanks with the help of clues.



1. Nuclear energy.
2. Nuclear fusion.
3. Nuclear reactor.
4. Nuclear science.

Answers:

# FUN TIMES



I

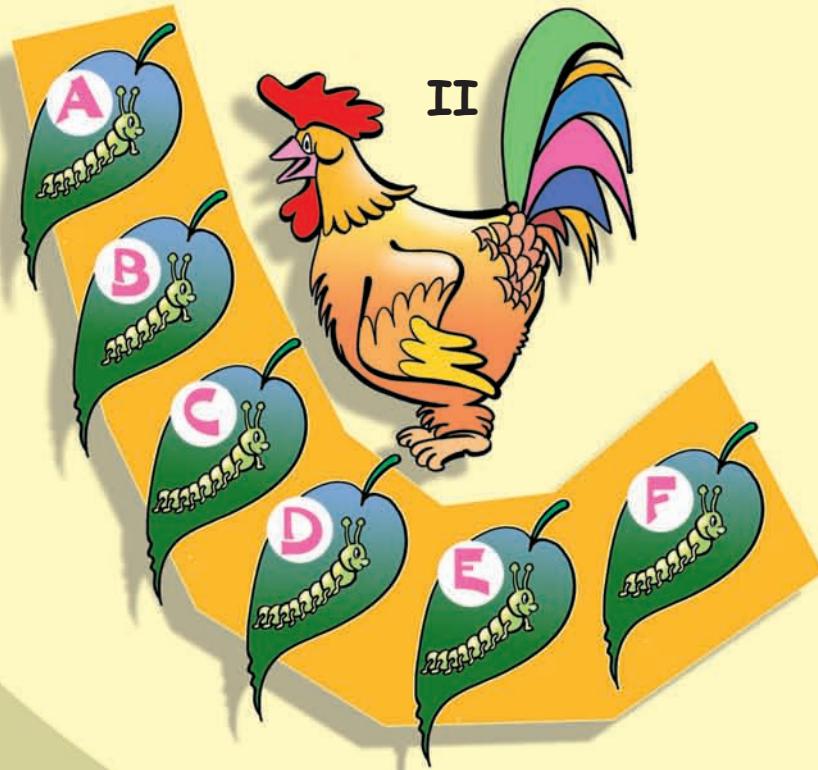
## Colouring Fun

The king of the jungle seems totally off colour! Get your colouring set and make him colourful and lively again.



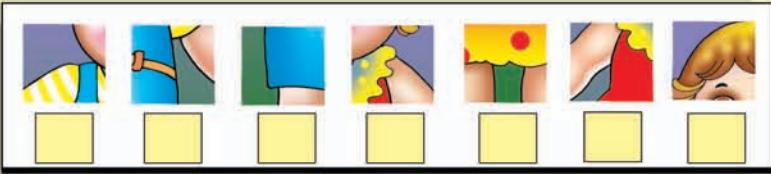
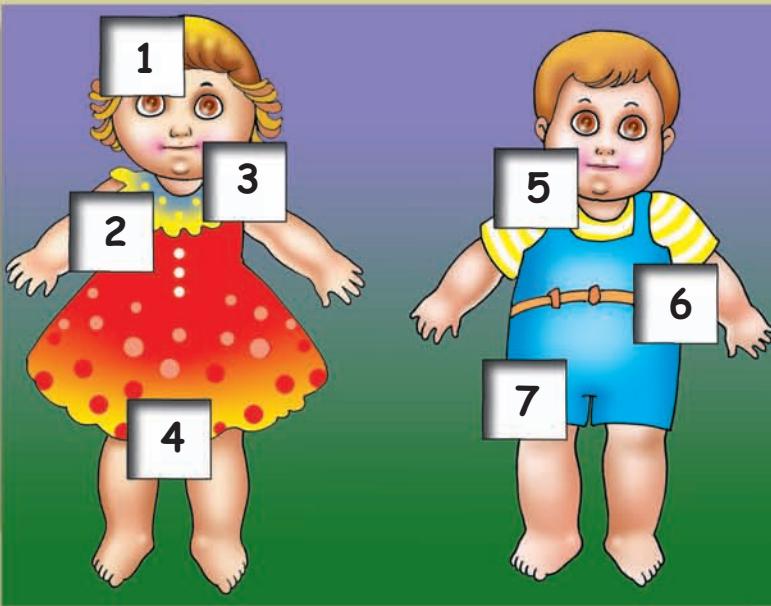
## Match Catch

Time for Miss Hen's breakfast. Help her match two similar worms to eat.



II

III



## Picture Mixture

Meena and Ramesh are waiting for their photo to be taken. Match the missing parts and complete their picture.



IV



## Maze Daze

Kapali gets left out in the shore while his son is on the boat. Guide Kapali through the water maze to reach the boat.

# Story of Ganesa

## 21. How the Lord rewards a devotee



Once upon a time, Vatapinagar attracted poets, intellectuals, musicians, singers, dancers, and artists. Gajana was a musician of repute. He composed several songs in praise of Vighneswara. Whenever he sang these songs at the temple, the idol of Ganesa would manifest as a young boy and dance to the tunes of Gajana. The devotees gathered at the temple would enjoy the songs, but would not see Bala Ganesa keeping rhythm with Gajana or dancing to his tunes.

The people of Vatapinagar every year honoured Gajana on his birthday by gifting him with a lovely golden idol of Ganesa. In course of time, he had an enviable collection of Ganesa idols. He earned the respect of not only the common people of Vatapinagar, but even the intellectuals. However, a few of them were also jealous of Gajana's fame. Their leader was someone called Swarakesari. He had a rough voice and whenever he spoke, his speech sounded like a lion's roar.

Gajana forgot himself whenever he sang in praise of the Lord. He was never after fame or wealth. Those jealous of him spread a rumour that Gajana had no proper training in music, and all that he was singing came from his imagination. Gajana was aware of such a remark from Swarakesari, but he did not show that he

was upset over it. Swarakesari was almost certain that Gajana would as usual receive a gift of a golden idol of Ganesa on his next birthday. He waited for an opportunity to slight him.

Gajana kept a cow. It was the duty of a youth called Nanda to milk the cow and serve the milk to Gajana.

The Navratri festival was approaching. Gajana and his family had gone to Kalyaninagar. He rushed to Vatapinagar where people had gathered in numbers to listen to his traditional invocation to Ganesa on the first day of the festival.

Meanwhile, Swarakesari had managed to get Nanda to serve Gajana milk mixed with water. Gajana was shocked. "What's this, Nanda? Why are you giving me adulterated milk?" he asked the youth in an angry tone.

Nanda, without batting an eyelid, told Gajana, "Master, I swear by Lord Ganesa that I haven't adulterated the milk!"

Gajana was surprised that Nanda had unusually raised his voice when he replied to him. Their conversation attracted some passers-by; Swarakesari, too, was among them.

"So, you've the audacity to swear by the Lord?"

asked Gajanana angrily. "Go inside and swear in front of an idol of Vighneswara!"

Nanda now began looking here and there as if he wanted somebody to support him.

"Why are you looking here and there? You know where the idols are kept! Go, go in and swear!" Gajanana was now shouting at him.

Nanda now looked scared. That was the signal for Swarakesari to tell Nanda, "Why do you hesitate? You already swore once, and you've only to repeat the same words!"

Nanda took it as the moral support he was waiting for, and went inside and in a trembling voice he swore: "If I have adulterated the milk, let my hands become useless, otherwise let the person who suspects me turn dumb!"

Gajanana's face went pale and he was unable to speak. Many in the crowd sympathised with him. "It's great pity that fate has been unkind to him," they were heard remarking. And Nanda found that his hands had not become listless, and with a triumphant look he moved to where Swarakesari was standing.

Suddenly, Bala Ganesa appeared before Gajanana, saying, "Uncle! Aunty is just getting down from the cart and will be here presently. I ran up before her!" It was then that he saw Nanda going away accompanied by Swarakesari. "You come back, Nanda!" he said in a commanding voice. "Let me also hear you swear. Mind you, if you tell a lie, your arms will become listless."

Swarakesari prompted Nanda once again. "Don't worry, Nanda, you've only to repeat the words."

But this time, Nanda was not sure whether he would not be found lying. He lost whatever courage he had. In a trembling voice, he blurted out, "No, I can't swear again! Let me confess. I had mixed water in the milk, as directed by Swarakesari. Please save me!" he added.

Everybody turned towards Swarakesari, who was seen running away from the crowd. Bala Ganesa told the crowd: "Those who swear and goad people to swear are both dishonest. They are only putting a veil on truth."

Gajanana was overjoyed. He embraced Bala Ganesa and seated him on his lap. Just then, a cart pulled up and young Ganesh Bhat got down and ran up to Gajanana,

who was then looking for Bala Ganesa sitting on his lap a while ago. Ganesh Bhat prostrated before Gajanana. "Uncle, please let me have your blessings."

"Ganesa! My Ganesa! You came here in the form of my nephew and made this home a sacred place. I shall now sing from here!" said Gajanana, much to the joy of the crowd.

Swarakesari went up to Gajanana and fell at his feet and said, "Sir, please forgive me. I won't get up till you say you've forgiven me."

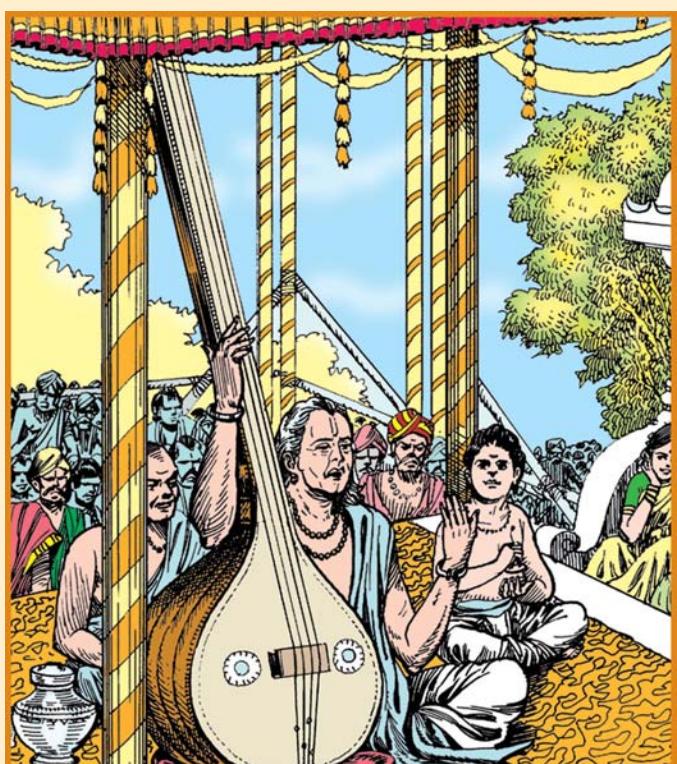
Gajanana helped him to rise on his feet and said, "Swarakesari, I know you were jealous of my popularity. When I sing, I forget myself and do not crave for rewards or awards."

Little Ganesh Bhat interjected and said, "Uncle, that does not mean that you would sing from your home only. Music is for everybody!"

"My son! It is Vighneswara himself who is making you say all these wise words. However, I shall sing for the benefit of everybody, but I shall not accept any reward in future."

Soon it was Gajanana's sixtieth birthday and he sang at the temple of Ganesa in Vatapinagar.

*(To continue)*



**T**his is a story I would like to share with my friends, wherever they are in the diverse regions of our country, and whatever language they are reading this in.

My name is Suni. I am a young girl of 12 living in Kagal village on the west coast of Karnataka. I go to the local government school. Earlier, life just went along endlessly like the waves in the sea, till one day two women came to our school to start a nature group. I joined up, and loved all the activities we did. Each week there was something new to think about. It made me feel alive and energetic, like never before.

Last December weekend, we had a nature camp on our village beach. We had just finished exams and gaily ran along the water's edge towards the *gudda* (hill) that we were going to hike up. Over, on the other side, was a grand view of the river Aganashini.

'Something is happening' shouted my classmate Arun, spotting a crowd of fishermen. We pushed our way through them and what I saw made me almost faint and fall back. It was a huge black-grey mass of flesh, and it was gently heaving! Part of some animal, no doubt – but where was the beginning and the end?

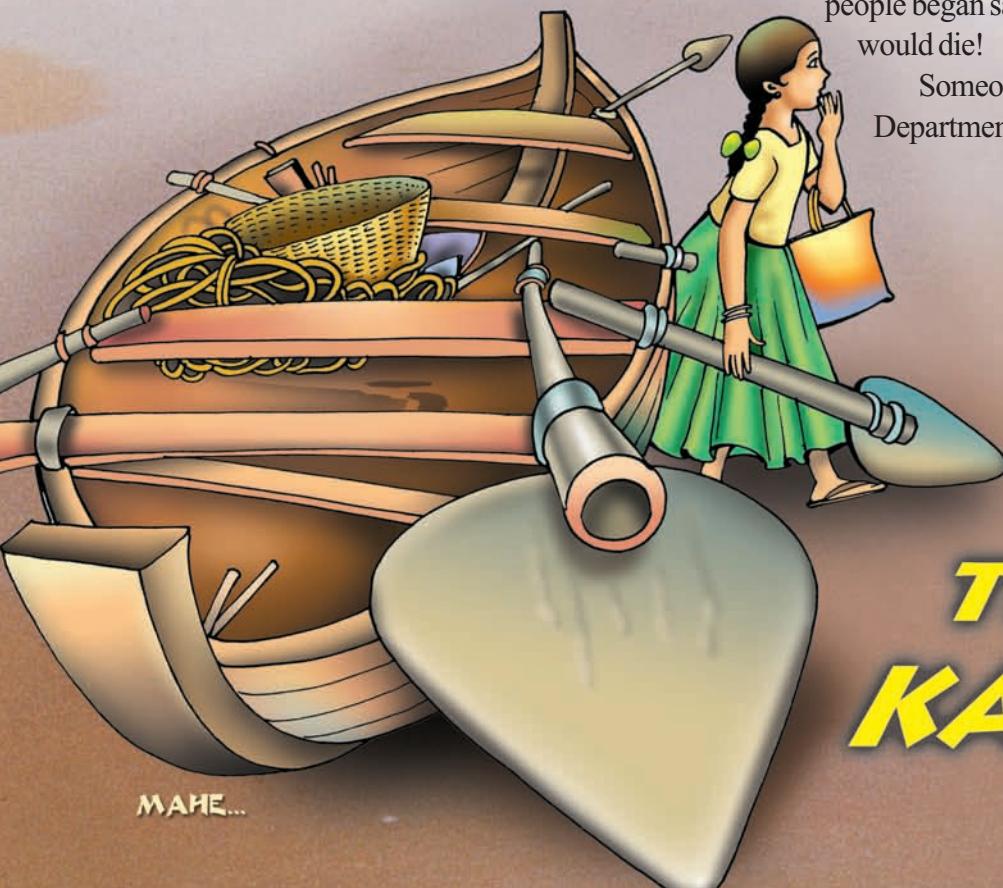
"Thimmingala," I heard someone say.

"Oh! A whale!" By now I had reached the crowd's innermost circle and saw the most magnificent creature stretched out on the sand. I quickly counted 36 people standing alongside it, which made it perhaps 50 feet in length. The whale was so high, I could not see over it. Some of the elders said it must have swum into the shallow waters of the sea, got washed on to the beach, and stranded there. The problem now was how to get the whale return to the ocean. Some young men were pouring buckets of sea water all over it. Lakshmi Akka, our nature club teacher, explained that the whale's skin had to be kept moist, so it did not dry out under the harsh sun.

Already, ropes were being tied to its flippers and teams were forming to try and drag it out into the sea. Our villagers are very strong, as they are used to dragging boats in and out. But no one realized just how heavy a whale would be, and it would not move an inch. More and more people started streaming in and there was a lot of noise. The whale was like a gentle giant hardly moving, not resisting, and its eyes looked so kind.

At least one and a half hours passed this way, and people began saying that there was no hope – this whale would die!

Someone from the Fisheries Department also came and took



## THE WHALE KAGAL VILLAGE

Whales, the world over, are a highly endangered species of marine mammals. Considered to be commercially important, they are hunted the world over. No part of the whale is wasted; even the bones, after the extraction of oil, are made into fertilizers. They are also threatened by seawater pollution. Whales getting stranded on the beach most often get dehydrated and die. The Blue Whale, the Finner Whale or Common Rorqual, and the Sperm Whale are known to occur in the Indian seas.

some measurements. All this while, no amount of effort could get the whale slide down to the water.

“If only we could put something slippery along its side, like oil,” someone said. But then we would need a truckload of oil! I had started getting desperate – after months of nature club activities, here was a real life problem, and we found ourselves helpless.

I began willing my mind to work.... something slippery, sliding... Then I slapped my forehead. But, of course!

“Lakshmi Akka,” I shouted, “why don’t we get everyone to make a paste of *Baslay Soppu* (Malabar spinach which is grown in most home gardens) and hibiscus (shoe flower leaves)? It is so slippery, we can pour it under the whale and pull!”

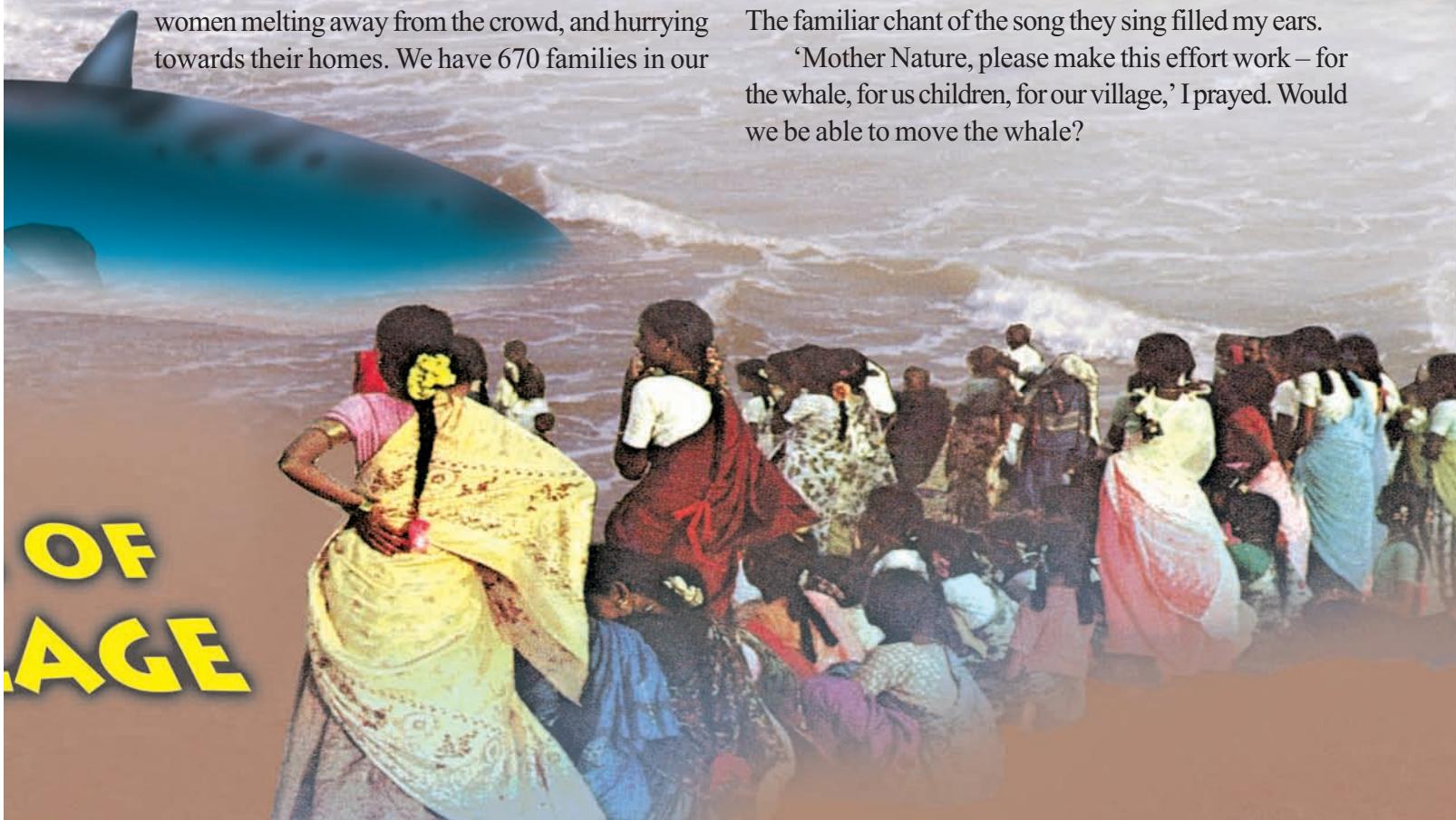
It was a crazy idea. But I was amazed to see the women melting away from the crowd, and hurrying towards their homes. We have 670 families in our

village. I ran to my mother and we both plucked all the *soppu* we had and began grinding it. I remembered we also had a lot of *lolaysara* (Aloe vera leaves) and that the gel from the plant is not just slippery but is also supposed to heal cuts and wounds. So I added that in.

We soon had five buckets of slime ready. We heaved out – my father helped. Crowds were coming with buckets, old tins, and cans filled with the slippery soup. Some persons with cycles and motorbikes had loaded drums with *baslay soppu* soap and were going to the whale. What a parade it was!! I had never seen the village so united in a cause. Normally, there are petty fights happening all the time, and a lot of local politics.

Everyone was sweating now, but began carefully pouring the green slime all along the length of the whale; at the same time the fishermen heaved to push and pull. The familiar chant of the song they sing filled my ears.

‘Mother Nature, please make this effort work – for the whale, for us children, for our village,’ I prayed. Would we be able to move the whale?



OF  
AGE

I truly believe that there was magic in the humble green slime that came from our hearts and homes that day. Because the whale began to slide along! To the water, half way into it, and then in it! The men were straining and sweating but kept up the tugging. Then the ropes were handed over to the small fishing boats in the water and they began to pull the whale towards the deeper waters.

Once it was in, the whale began to help by attempting to swim. Further and further the boats went as we stood

and watched. Finally, I saw the boatsmen roll up the ropes. The whale was on its own! The boatsmen stayed there watching and we peered from the shore. The last thing I remember seeing was a line of our boats, and then a giant spout of water from the whale as she swam off into the blue depths of its familiar territory. Could our hearts be fuller than this?

- Sunita Rao

Courtesy: *Kalpavriksh and the National Biodiversity and Strategic Action Plan*

**Meet the...**

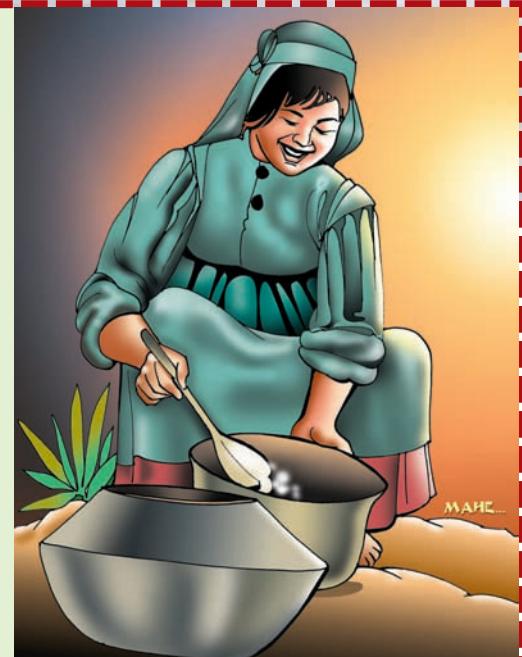
## Durrani of Afghanistan

How would you like to have two homes - one in the cool mountains for the summer, and the other in the warm plains for the winter? Sounds great, doesn't it? Well, that's exactly how the Durrani tribals of Afghanistan spend their lives!

The Durrani can be described as semi-nomads, who live at least a part of the year in tents. Being members of traditional herds and farmers, they spend a greater part of the year in the winter quarters, known as *watan* or 'home'. Their cattle comprise mainly sheep and goats. The winter quarters are villages near a water source - a river, spring or underground channel. At the end of April, the cattle-owners leave for their summer quarters, while the landowners stay on. To reach the traditional summer pasture, the nomads have to travel through rough country, and the trip takes anything from ten days to a month. They remain in their summer camp for two months, and this is a busy period for the whole family. The sheep thrive on the strong mountain grass and produce milk, which is turned into yoghurt and cheese. The sheep are shorn and the wool is pressed into felt. At the end of July, the caravans are ready to make the return journey to the *watan*. On their way, they pick the seasonal fruits, including apricots, grapes and melons.

When they reach home by the end of August, the grain would have been harvested and is ready for use. With the major tasks having got out of the way, autumn is a time of ease and comparative plenty.

We are reminded of the temporary shifting of the capital from Delhi to Shimla during summer when the Britishers were ruling India. The entire administrative machinery would leave for the hills early in April and return by June end. A similar exercise still goes on in Jammu & Kashmir, when the State administration packs off for Jammu during winter.





# THE GIFT OF A TURKEY THAT DISCOVERED A MURDER

**I**t was well after noon that Friday, November 23, 1849. In their Beacon Hill home in Boston, Mrs. Parkman, her daughter, and her invalid sister-in-law patiently kept waiting for the lettuce. They were to prepare a special delicacy with it for their midday meal. But the clock went ticking by and Dr. George Parkman who had gone to fetch the vegetable did not show up. It was very unusual, indeed, for the doctor always kept his time. Anxious and worried, they sent word all around about the missing master of the house.

Dr. George Parkman was one of the wealthiest in Boston of those days. So rich was he that his son, who never worked nor earned a penny in his life, was able to will five million dollars for the improvement and upkeep of his locality. In fact, Dr. Parkman had studied medicine but never practised as a physician. He owned a host of properties and was supposed to have donated the very land on which stood the Harvard Medical College. He had even endowed the Parkman Chair of Anatomy, which was then occupied by none other than the famous Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes.

In spite of his wealth, the doctor owned no horse-drawn carriage. He preferred to collect the rents from his many tenants on foot. Generously he gave away money for various noble causes, but realised the money he lent out to the last penny and in due time.

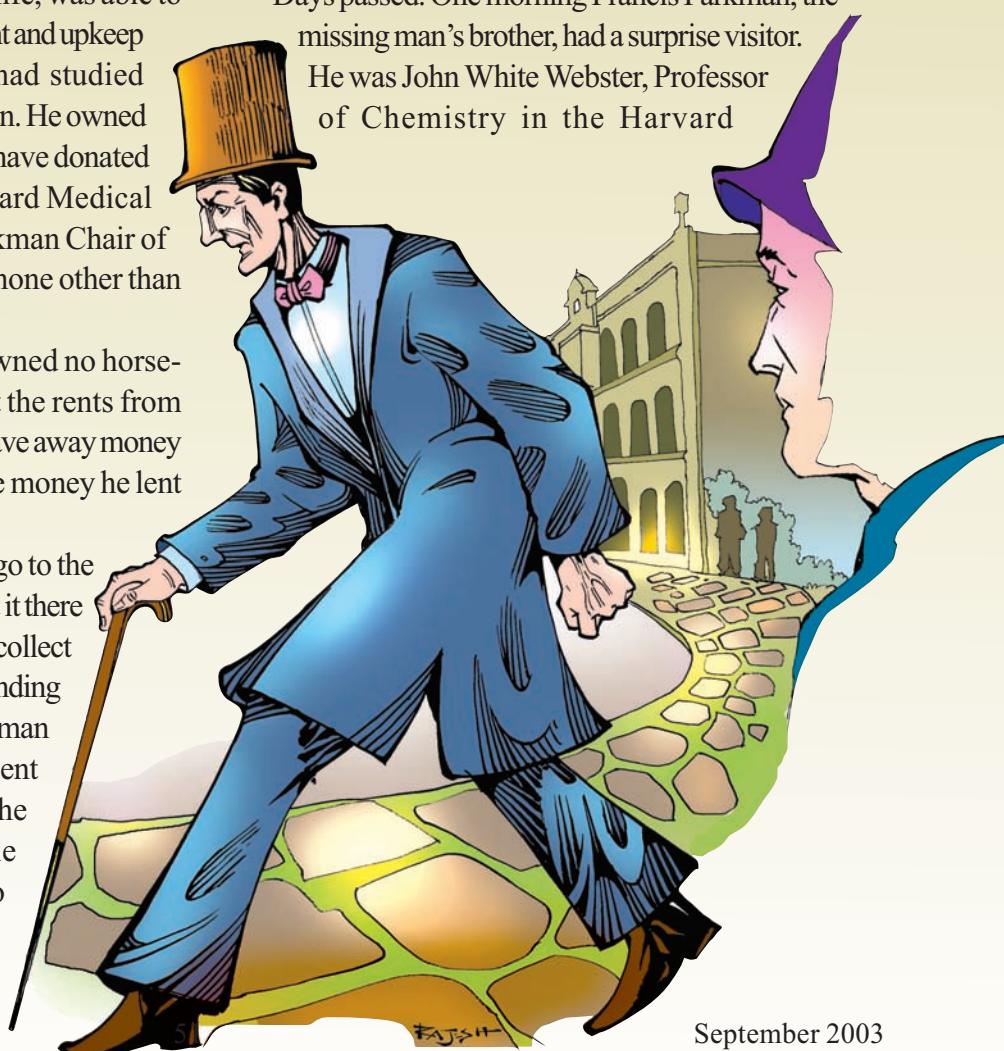
That Friday morning the doctor did go to the greengrocer. He bought the lettuce and left it there in the bag, telling the grocer that he would collect it on his way home. A certain merchant standing in front of his store had observed Dr. Parkman passing by. He looked to be in an impatient haste, vigorously tapping his cane on the pavement as he plodded along. The merchant was reportedly the last man who ever saw him.

Where could he have gone? The

police and the detectives were bewildered. Was he kidnapped for ransom? But no one yet claimed any money! Days of search and investigations yielded no results.

Finally, the doctor's family members announced rewards. Three thousand dollars for any one who brought Dr. George Parkman alive, and one thousand to the one who located his body. Considering those old times, the amounts were indeed handsome! It was not before long that almost all the able residents of Boston, young and old, rich and not so rich, were found combing the entire city and its suburbs.

Days passed. One morning Francis Parkman, the missing man's brother, had a surprise visitor. He was John White Webster, Professor of Chemistry in the Harvard

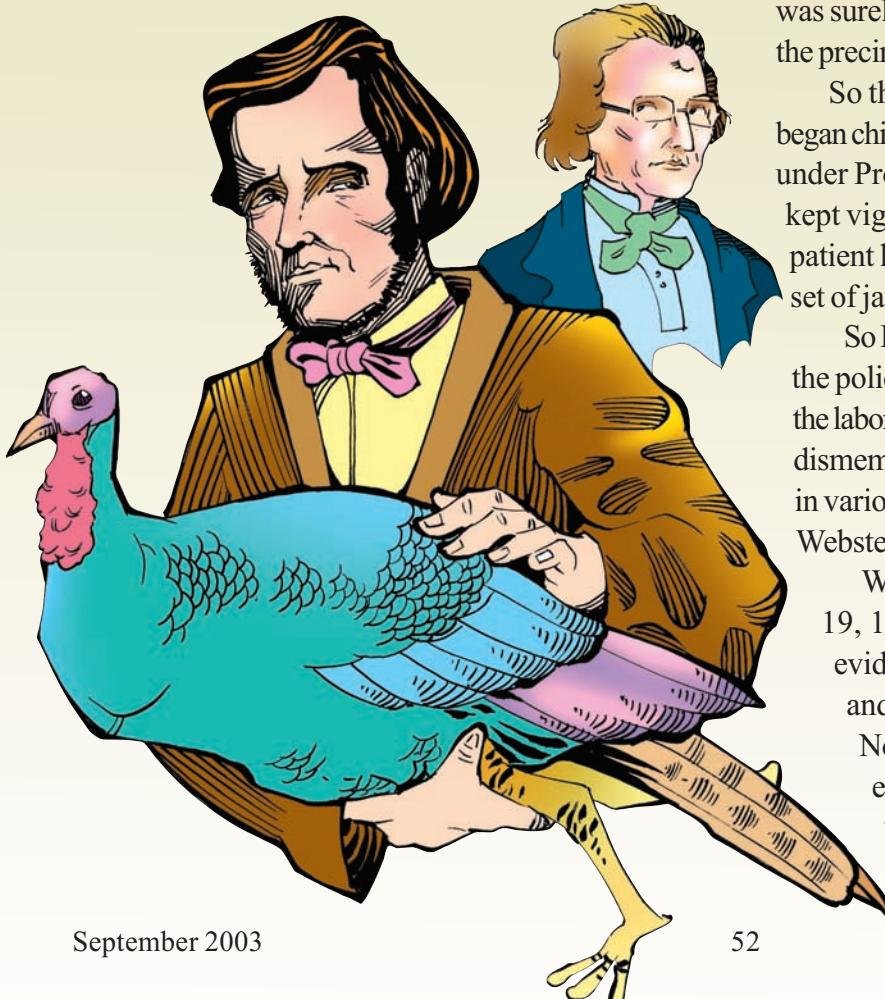


Medical College for more than two decades. He was a bespectacled stout little man with a crop of black hair on his head. Everybody thought he had come to offer his sympathies to the family. But his intentions were different.

"Good morning," he greeted with a nervous grin and continued, "I've come to tell you that I had met your brother that Friday afternoon at half-past one. In fact, as I was keeping extremely busy, I had not seen the papers and notices with the news of the doctor's disappearance until last evening. Alas!"

Then Professor Webster took his leave.

The professor's modest annual salary of 1,200 dollars was not sufficient to meet the expenses of his family with wife and four pretty daughters who led a lavish lifestyle. So, he began to borrow money and soon ran into heavy debts. Dr. Parkman was a generous a creditor. But he expected his borrowers to return the money positively within the stipulated time. It seems for a long time he was persistently after Prof. Webster to return his money. His constant nagging had often irritated and angered the professor.



But where did Dr. George Parkman disappear? It began to look as though some robbers had waylaid the doctor, done away with him and made off with the 483.64 dollars that Prof. Webster claimed to have paid him.

Nobody ever suspected the professor of an institution as renowned as the Harvard. But one unassuming person had the courage to do so. He was a stout little man with deep brooding eyes. His name was Ephraim Littlefield and he was the janitor of the Medical College.

About three days after the doctor's disappearance, Mr. Littlefield had been summoned by Prof. Webster and presented with a big round turkey. It was the first gift that the caretaker had ever received from his master in seven long years of service in the college. He began to brood and ponder. Why should the professor so suddenly be nice to him and give him a gift?

Even to the janitor's wife, a simple woman, this gesture of Prof. Webster seemed unusual. But how could a Harvard professor come under suspicion? It looked strange to her. But Ephraim Littlefield had a strong premonition. He strongly felt that Dr. George Parkman was surely there either dead or alive somewhere within the precincts of the Medical College.

So the suspicious and determined caretaker soon began chiselling and hammering the solid walls and vaults under Prof. Webster's laboratory, while his good wife kept vigil for any intruders. After a couple of days of patient labour, he struck something. Alas, they were a set of jawbones and teeth.

So Ephraim Littlefield wasted no time and informed the police. They further searched the basement below the laboratory and discovered to their amazement several dismembered parts of a human body burnt and hidden in various recesses of the underground chamber. Prof. Webster was forthwith arrested and put behind bars.

Was he guilty or not? The trial began on March 19, 1850. It was a unique case of circumstantial evidence. For, no one had actually seen the culprit and the victim together during the act of murder.

Nor the time when it took place could be exactly established. The case would have to be decided with available material evidences.

Thousands of people, including visitors and

journalists from nearby towns and even as far away as Europe, gathered in Boston to witness the historic hearing. But the gallery of the courtroom was rather small to accommodate such a huge mass. So, the thoughtful authorities decided a complete change of audience from time to time. Thus in the eleven days of the trial, the courtroom hosted a record number of more than 60,000 people.

All the eminent personalities of Boston and of the Harvard College spoke and put forward their views. But the star witness was naturally the little janitor. He talked tirelessly for one whole day, five hours in the morning and three in the afternoon. But the accused John W. Webster still feigned innocence. He argued through his lawyers that the various parts of the dismembered body were those of a cadaver brought for experimental purposes of medical students.

The prosecution summoned the next man as witness. He was Dr. Nathan Keep, a dentist by profession. Not long ago he had made the denture and false teeth for Dr. George Parkman. He remembered what a difficult task it was as the doctor had an unusually protruding jaw. As a memento that Dr. Keep had once fixed the teeth of a great man of Boston, he had preserved the very mould he had prepared for him. He held it in his hand for all to see.

Next onto the witness desk were brought the teeth that Ephraim Littlefield had discovered in the basement below the laboratory. All looked on with bated breath. Then tooth by tooth the dentist fitted the discovered charred teeth into the mould. There was now no doubt that they belonged to none other than Dr. George Parkman. The whole court gave out a long deep sigh.

The verdict was given by Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw, one of Boston's greatest jurists. His address is still considered by lawyers as a model exposition on the subject of circumstantial evidence.

Professor John White Webster was pronounced guilty and sentenced to death. Before he was hanged on August 30, 1850 he did make his confession. That Friday



afternoon Dr. Parkman had provoked the professor by calling him names. He even threatened him to put him out of his job, as he was the one who was responsible to get him his present assignment. That so infuriated Prof. Webster that he took a club-like wood and dealt him a mighty blow. It was enough to put an end to the doctor's life.

Prof. Webster called on the doctor's brother and informed him of his meeting with Dr. Parkman on the day of his disappearance just to remain above doubt in case somebody had seen them together. He tried to keep the little janitor happy by giving him a gift - a turkey - in case he had seen or suspected anything.

Years later, in 1867 when the famous novelist Charles Dickens paid a visit to Boston, he was asked by his hosts, "Sir, which landmark of the city would you like to see first?" Out came his answer in a moment, stunning all present, "I would like to visit the room where Dr. Parkman was murdered!"

Alas, what a flutter this grisly murder had created in those good old days!

# Newsflash

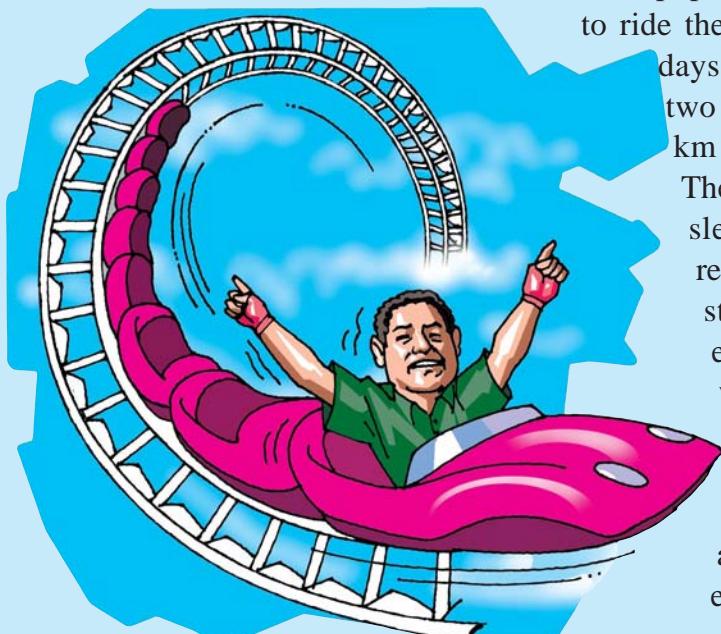
## Last wish fulfilled

Ten year old Huang Ge was suffering from cancer and he knew he would not live long. One day he told his father Huang Xiaoyong that he very much wished to see the famous Tiananmen Square in Beijing. But then, the Chinese capital is some 2,000km away from the Hunan province where they are living. The 44-year-old affectionate father was eager to fulfil his son's wish. He has no vehicle other than a bicycle. He improvised a two seater with a hood to protect them from rain and sun and started pedalling all that distance, which he covered in 62 days. The boy was very happy he could see the Square, where many historic events had taken place, before he would breathe his last.



## Days on a roller-coaster

Richard Rodriguez is a lecturer in a college in the USA. Recently he was on a visit to Berlin where he went to a popular amusement park. There he expressed a wish to ride the roller-coaster all by himself non-stop for a few days together. He wanted to break the record set by two Japanese visitors who had remained on the 120 km per hour 'sky-train' for a little over 35 hours. The park authorities agreed. Richard would eat and sleep on the roller-coaster and would be allowed rest for 15 minutes every 8 hours. The roller-coaster started, and he broke the Japanese record at the end of 48 hours, but he wanted to create a record which would remain unbeaten for some good time. He spent more than four days before he de-trained. His only worry was that he was exposed to the hot sun during the day, but he assured the waiting newsmen that he thoroughly enjoyed the fun. Fun indeed!

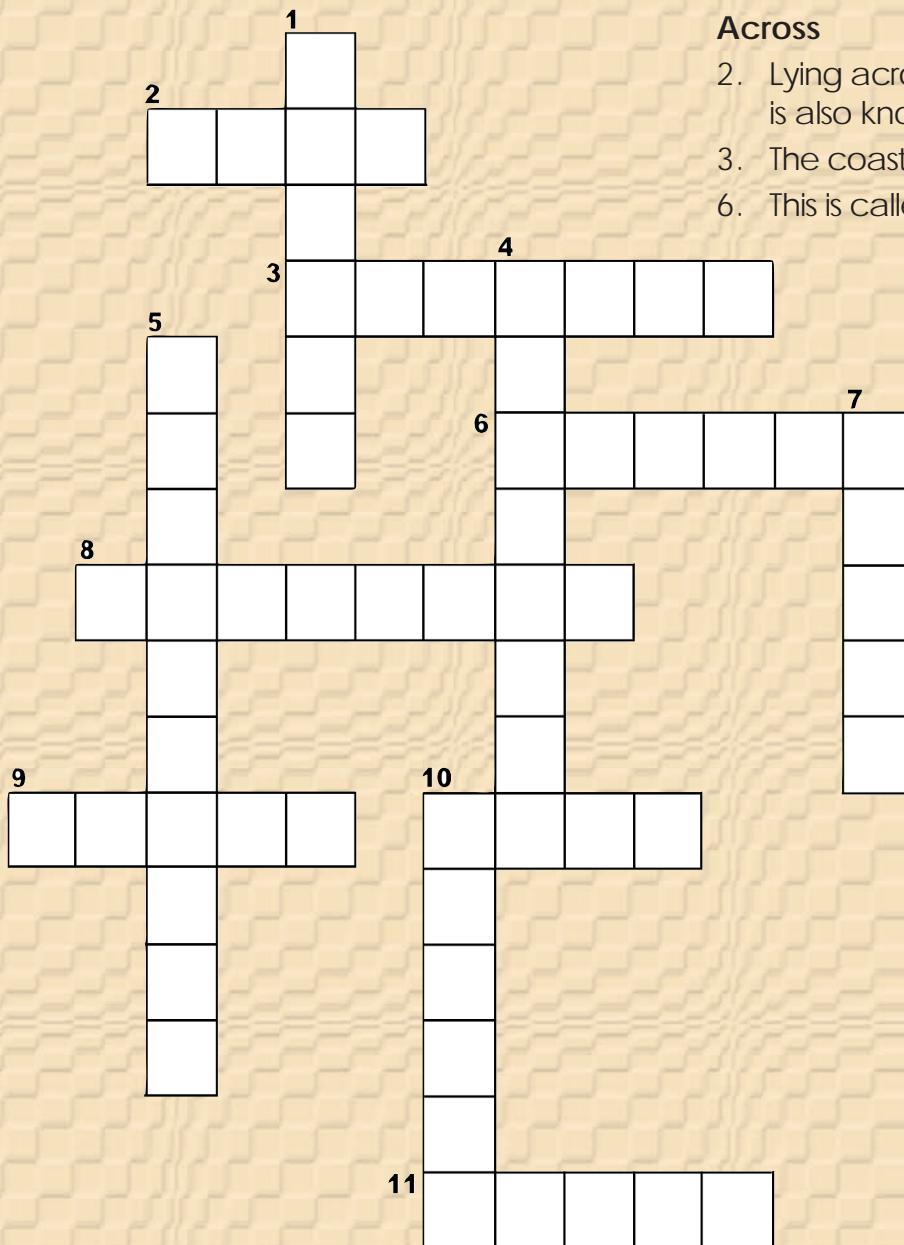


# PUZZLE DAZZLE

## Desert Dangle – a ride through deserts



Deserts are arid regions of land that receive very little or no rainfall at all. Deserts are found all over the world. Given below is a crossword based on the deserts of the world. Solve it with the help of the clues given. Hop on to the desert safari!



### Across

2. Lying across India and Pakistan, this desert is also known as The Great Indian Desert
3. The coastal desert in Chile
6. This is called the Western Desert in Egypt
8. The desert that extends into Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa
9. The arid valleys lead up to the holy mountain, Sinai
10. The desert of Mongolia and Central Asia
11. The desert in Israel that tapers to Port Eilat

### Down

1. The largest desert in the world
4. The desert that extends from California to Northern Mexico
5. The semi-arid regions of Argentina
7. The coastal desert of southwest Africa
10. The vast dry region of Western Australia

- By Vidhya Raj



Dear eco friends,

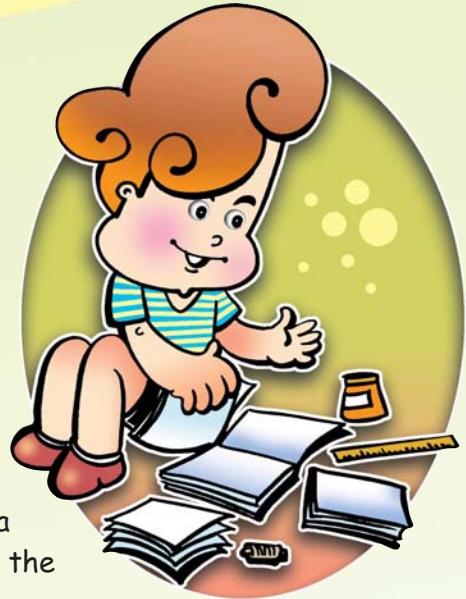
Every year, tonnes of paper are used, for which countless trees are chopped down. Did you know that 12 per cent of the timber chopped worldwide (which works out to a stupendous figure) goes to make paper? Thus, every scrap of paper saved is a step towards saving trees - and thereby, protecting our environment. Do your bit to help Planet Earth, by reducing wastage of precious paper.

Love

KOPRA KUTTY

## Tips on paper-saving

1. Use paper carefully. Write on both sides of a sheet.
2. At the end of the school year, do not discard used notebooks that still have a few blank pages left in them. Take out the blank sheets from all the notebooks and get them bound. You'll get a brand-new notebook, all ready for use!
3. Don't throw away used cartons and gift-wrapping paper, but reuse them as much as possible.
4. Carry a canvas or net tote bag when you shop. It's not only a safe, convenient way to carry purchases; it also eliminates the need for the shopkeeper's disposable paper bags.



5. Use cotton handkerchiefs and cloth napkins instead of paper tissues and napkins.
6. Use recycled paper wherever possible.
7. While travelling, holding a party or going on picnics, use re-usable dishes, plates and cups instead of disposable paper plates and cups. Not only does this save paper, it also keeps litter down.

This came from Pallavi Guha, Mumbai:

I really love the Jataka Tales; I am asking my father to get me a book. I hope Kaleidoscope is not a separate magazine.

Kaleidoscope will appear in the middle of the magazine and so it can be easily pulled out and preserved. At the end of 12 months, if you were to put them together, you will have a 48-page magazine! How do you like that? - Editor.

This came from S.V.Seshadri, Cuddapah:

The answer to question by Sumant Garg of Panaji in Ask Away is appreciable. It would have been more effective if "only" had been added in one of the concluding sentences to read: "Learn enough not ONLY from text-books but from the world around you."

Meghna Mitra of Kolkata has this to say:

Chandamama is just wonderful and too attractive. I enjoy reading the Jataka Tales and the stories of the Arabian Nights. I also like the folk tales of different States.

Sai Aparna from Hyderabad writes:

The new look is fabulous. I have been reading Chandamama from my First Class; I am now in my 12th Standard. It really enhances the reading habit in children. All the stories are fantastic.

Aparna R.Nair from Agartala writes:

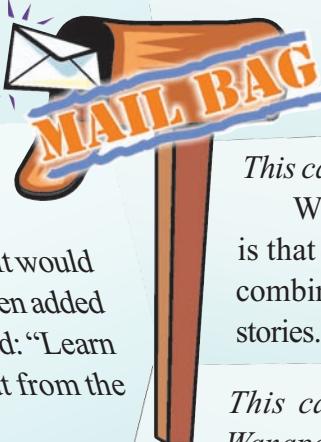
I love reading Chandamama. I have been reading it for the past three years.

This came from Ruchi Ahuja, New Delhi:

What I like most about Chandamama is that it explains life to children with a combination of realistic and entertaining stories.

This came from G. Ramsri Goutham of Wanaparthi:

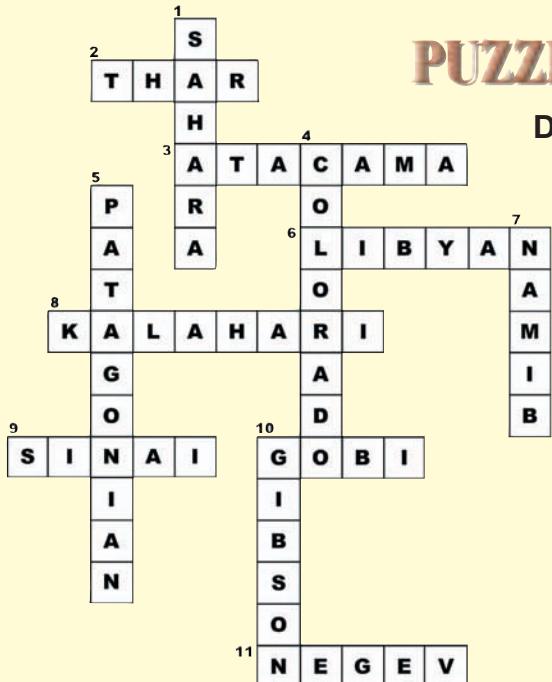
I like Chandamama a lot. I am attracted by stories, jokes, Indiascope and Kaliedoscope items. Each page is read with great enthusiasm. I feel every child should read Chandamama in order to gain knowledge.



## ALL THE ANSWERS

### PUZZLE DAZZLE

#### Desert Dangle



II) Match Catch :  
Worms C and E are similar

III) Picture Mixture :  
The sequence of the pictures are :  
5, 6, 7, 3, 4, 2, 1.



*Click  
a caption*

## PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

*Can you write a caption  
in a few words,  
to suit these pictures related  
to each other?*

You may write it on a post card and mail it to:

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*(at the address given below)*

to reach us before the 20th of the current month.  
A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry  
which will be published in the issue after the next.

*Winning  
Entry*

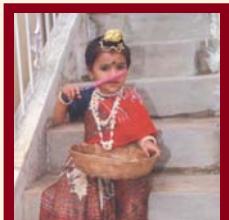
**“Fortune-maker”  
“Fortune-teller”**

*Congratulations!*

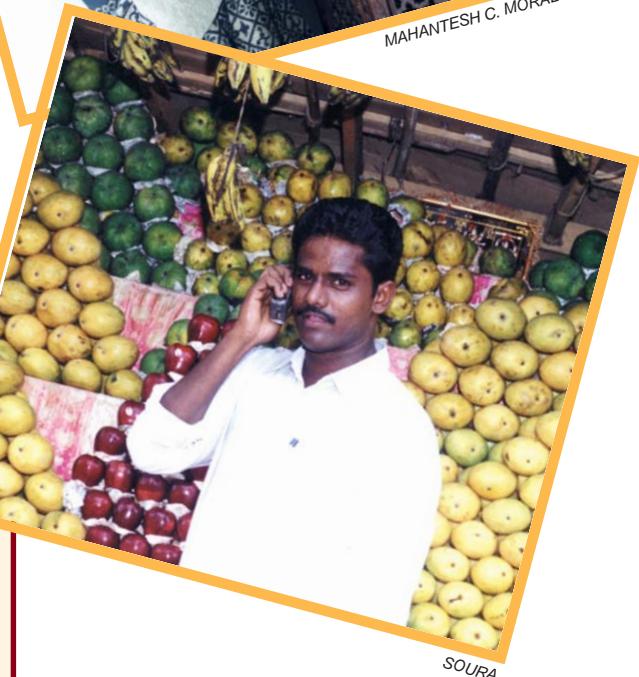
The Prize for the  
July 2003  
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# FOR MOTHERS

## A CONTEST WITH A DIFFERENCE !

**Theme :** A true incident  
in the early years  
( 6-9 ) of her child  
( in 250 - 300 words )



**Prize : Educational endowment in the name of the  
child in the form of National Savings Certificate**

One First  
Prize :  
Endowment for  
Rs. 10,000

Two Second  
Prizes :  
Endowment  
for Rs. 5,000  
each



Look for entry form and more details in

**JUNIOR**  
**CHANDAMAMA**

October 2003 issue



# Melters

*Butterscotch Candy*

The taste  
that melts  
everything  
away!

**nutrine**

